



THE GHOST OF FLEETWOOD MAC

BY ANTHONY BOZZA

ROCK ROYALTY MICK FLEETWOOD LOOKS BACK AT
ONE OF THE GREATEST YET MOST DYSFUNCTIONAL BANDS IN
MUSIC HISTORY AND FIGURES OUT WHAT COMES NEXT

Stretching 48 miles long and 26 across, Maui, the second-largest of the Hawaiian islands, is a tropical paradise full of dreamy beaches and lush landscapes, the most atypical of which is arranged over 18 acres at 4,000 feet above sea level. Near the top of a winding one-lane road cut into a ruddy hillside, a shady driveway dips beneath a canopy of trees to reveal a spread that—minus the citrus groves—looks more like an English country home than a tropical retreat. Clouds that seem but an arm's length away cast moody shadows over the homestead, giving the sense that this place is half a world from the sunlit valley below. Lovely bushes of pink and blue flowers abuzz with bees line the roundabout that lies before the front door. Beyond it, stretching into the trees, a long, manicured lawn awaits a garden party or a game of croquet. Off to one

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHIAS CLAMER

“IN THE PAST I’D NOT HAVE TAKEN NO FOR AN ANSWER. I’D HAVE PERSUADED STEVIE TO DO THE TOUR. BUT I’M NOT DOING THAT THIS TIME OR EVER AGAIN.”

—MICK FLEETWOOD



side, a fenced pen with a tasteful wooden shed houses Tilly, an 18-month-old black-and-white potbellied pig that is blissfully excited by the sudden arrival of guests.

This is Mick Fleetwood’s estate in Kula—part studio, part rehearsal space, part hide-away and all dapper man cave—which has been a refuge from everything that comes with being a legendary rock-and-roll drummer for nearly 50 years. Though he and his soon-to-be third ex-wife, Lynn, and their two children have lived near the beaches on the other side of the island, in a home that once belonged to his Fleetwood Mac co-founder John McVie, Fleetwood has relished this place as his personal creative space. Over the years everyone from Willie Nelson to George Harrison to Steven Tyler has come through to play for fun or to rehearse for one of the many benefit concerts Fleetwood has participated in. During his downtime from Fleetwood Mac, he

has also put together a few bands of talented local players with whom he’s toured the Hawaiian islands and points farther afield.

Fleetwood opens the door to reveal a lofty great room with exposed beams, wagon-wheel chandeliers and a roaring fire below a huge mantel of pink and green granite. A meticulously restored piano that has been in his wife’s family for more than 100 years sits before a large window. Behind the piano, an even larger painting, *The Blue Rose*, fills the wall. It’s done in neo-Renaissance style and includes a likeness of Rodin’s *The Thinker*, a

nude female angel playing a harp, a pack of blues musicians, an ax and a headless torso—and more nude women—plus a portrait of Fleetwood in the midst of it all, draped in a patterned scarf and wearing a white shirt. There is, naturally, a blue rose in there too.

“Come, have a look around,” he says. “There are some great old pictures of John McVie, Peter Green and me hanging about—real schoolboy stuff—and some good shots of George Harrison in the next room.” Fleetwood stands six-foot-six and sports long, straight white hair with a wise wizard’s beard to match. He’s wearing linen trousers and a matching shirt, which is unbuttoned low. He has a long scarf around his neck and looks every inch the lord of this manor: He’s one part maharaja, two parts bohemian royal. Aside from his stature, the most striking thing about Fleetwood is his eyes. Clear blue and massive, they’re capable of conveying wide-eyed wonder, deep compassion or a wild man’s gaze from one moment to the next. They are exceedingly honest too, because Fleetwood is all those things.

Fleetwood’s drum kit commands one end of the room, and racks of guitars, a few ukuleles and all manner of percussion instruments line the walls and floor. An eclectic, eccentric decor abounds, ranging from vintage Wurlitzer jukeboxes full of early-1950s soul and rock to Tiffany lamps, African art, a variety of books, a few antique suitcases and hatboxes, plus a collection of photos and memorabilia that would make any Fleetwood Mac fan salivate. Fleetwood recently brought these spoils of his travels and career out of storage to redecorate the living room himself.

“When I saw this place, within 10 minutes I knew I was home. But I just used it to play and rehearse. All my bachelor stuff was shut up in here, and it was empty, really. I was never encouraged by my wife to do anything with it, but now so much is changing in my life,” he says, taking a long look around. “I was terrified by all of that at first but not anymore. Once I made my peace with how this next chapter of my life is unfolding, I began to pull the belongings that I valued and set about creating a home here. It was the right thing to do. I plan to transform this into my main estate and live here full-time very soon.”

At 64, an age at which most men are settling down—or at least settling in—Fleetwood is doing the opposite. He is readdressing everything he had taken for granted, from his personal relationships to his professional goals, and he’s (continued on page 110)



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1. Mick Fleetwood and Stevie Nicks in 1983, during happier times. They had had an affair, but given the unusual dynamic of Fleetwood Mac, they were hardly alone when it came to emotional musical chairs. 2. The band’s 1975 incarnation: Fleetwood, Nicks, Lindsey Buckingham, Christine McVie and John McVie. 3. Nicks and Fleetwood at a press conference in 1979. 4. The group circa 1973: Bob Weston, Christine McVie, Bob Welch, John McVie and Fleetwood.

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diving headlong into flux. Some of these changes are beyond his control, but the wise man's destiny is determined not by the events he encounters so much as by how he reacts to them. Fleetwood, as co-founder of one of the longest-standing acts in rock and roll, and as a player in top form and prime health, has accepted that all he has built is no longer sound, and he's embracing the future with the same fluid grace that characterizes his drumming. He seems more than all right, and he'll be the first to tell you as much.

The biggest change in his life is in progress: his separation from his wife, Lynn, after 16 years of marriage. The loquacious drummer will say no more about it, apart from the fact that the couple plan to do everything they can to make the transition as easy as it can be on their two young children. And yet, this isn't the longest-running relationship coming undone for him now.

"I don't believe Fleetwood Mac will ever tour again," Fleetwood says dryly. "But I really hope we do. We have rehearsed and prepared for it since 2010. We were supposed to tour in 2011, but we delayed it for a year to allow Stevie Nicks to support her solo record and for Lindsey Buckingham to do the same with his. I've always been supportive of my bandmates doing solo albums, so long as we kept our band together. If you look at the credits as far back as you like, I've always played extensively on many of them, and this time was no different. I played drums on most of Stevie's latest album, the one she is still out there supporting and the one that is the reason that for now she refuses to do a Fleetwood Mac tour. It comes down to her, and for the first time, I think, even Lindsey has lost his patience. All of this uncertainty is a tremendous change for me."

Fleetwood looks off to the side, pulls his white mane into a tight ponytail and collects his thoughts. It's clear he wants to get this just right. "Stevie is really proud of her new album, and I get that, but she will not let it go. Honestly, it's not easy out there, and it's done well, but she's insistent upon working it until it is incapable of growing further. I understand what she likes about her situation: Touring in support of her album, she is able to be her, without any degree of compromise. She doesn't have to worry about the other three of us asking her to do anything—which is basically the contract that comes with being in a band. She has become enthralled and obsessed with her album in a very nice but very inconvenient way. She's working 20 times harder than she would ever have to with Fleetwood Mac and not making anything close to as much money as she would with us. But that is what she wants to do, and I respect that. In the past I'd not have taken no for an answer and I'd have persuaded Stevie or whoever needed persuading at the time to do the tour. But I'm not doing that this time or ever again, and there is

nothing else to say about it. Stevie changed her program and changed her mind, and however willful anyone may be, this is what's happening. Or not happening, rather. It's quite simple: Stevie changed her mind. And you know what? That is our innate privilege as humans: Each of us has the right to change our mind."

Nicks's change of heart comes with a steep cost, though—one that even such rock royalty as Fleetwood, Buckingham and McVie can't deny. The last time the band's entire 1970s-era lineup toured was in 1997, after recording *The Dance*, which remains one of the top-selling live albums of all time. They played 44 shows in the U.S., a tour that raked in \$60 million, which would be roughly \$84 million today. After that tour Christine McVie retired from show business, but she did vocals on one more album, 2003's commercially successful *Say You Will*; when the band toured, however, Nicks and Buckingham were obliged to cover Christine's vocals. The band played intermittently in the years that followed. It is safe to assume that the fans will be rabid for the next tour. One promoter estimates that Fleetwood, Buckingham, McVie and Nicks would take home \$10 million apiece from an eight-month arena tour. A tour that apparently will never be.

"It is certainly a blow to all of us financially," Fleetwood says wryly. "I don't care what you have and what money means to you, we're talking about a very sizable, profitable tour. We're talking about being paid well to do something that, unless I've misread things in this band for the past 30 years, we all love to do, because we've continued to do it even during our most difficult times individually and as a group. As a band we don't work very often, so we never became some big moneymaking machine like the Eagles. The Eagles are absolutely brilliant—they work relentlessly, they put on a great show and they have all the money in the world to prove it. We just never fucking did that." He turns to look down the mountain at Maalaea Harbor, resplendent in the afternoon sun. "Fleetwood Mac could have been that and still could be today if we choose to, but we're not and we won't. Instead we are the worst-run franchise in the rock-and-roll business."

Fleetwood has, by all accounts, been the ringleader of this eponymous institution since its earliest incarnations (of which there have been many). He did a short stint in the iconic British blues ensemble known as John Mayall's Bluesbreakers before being released, as legend has it, for chronic insobriety at gigs. Around this time, Fleetwood befriended lead guitarist Peter Green, who replaced Eric Clapton. Green, Fleetwood and bassist John McVie began recording on their own and eventually, in 1967, came together as a blues band dubbed Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac. So began a long and storied history in which the outfit morphed from an instrumental blues band into a vocal

blues band into a rock band into the pop music juggernaut it became in the mid-1970s and remained through the late 1980s. Members have come and gone, including Bob Welch, Jeremy Spencer, Danny Kirwan and the recently deceased Bob Weston. Relationships have done the same: The McVies' marriage dissolved in 1976, as did Buckingham and Nicks's long-term romance. Fleetwood has also had his share of heartache and complications. He married, then divorced, then remarried Jenny Boyd, younger sister of Pattie Boyd, who was famously married to George Harrison and Eric Clapton. Fleetwood and Jenny were on and off for about 12 years and had two daughters before parting for good in 1976. In 1978 Fleetwood fell in love with Sara Recor (for whom the song "Sara" was written), a model, singer and friend of Stevie Nicks's, and married her in 1988, only to divorce in the early 1990s. Fleetwood married for the fourth time in 1995, this time to Lynn Frankel, with whom he has two daughters. In addition, a number of affairs—among them Fleetwood and Nicks's and Jenny Boyd and Bob Weston's—added to the insanity and pressure within the group. It also didn't help matters that two of the group's earliest guitarists (Green and Kirwan) would eventually be diagnosed with mental health disorders and that one (Spencer) simply walked off and joined the Children of God cult on his way to a bookshop. Green, who was diagnosed with schizophrenia, has dabbled in music minimally and noncommercially ever since. Despite Fleetwood's best efforts, Green doesn't see the point in playing for profit. Spencer is still a member of the Children of God (now called the Family International), for which he records music, attends gospel conventions and writes and illustrates books.

Green was the man who enlisted the rhythm section for which the band was named, but today Michael John Kells "Mick" Fleetwood is one of the outfit's two remaining original members. This group, for all intents and purposes, is as much his family as are his blood kin.

"The news that this tour might never happen was devastating to me," Fleetwood says. "We have been through so many ups and downs and false starts that, really, it's almost a part of our process. Nearly every Fleetwood Mac album going back to the mid-1980s began as a Lindsey Buckingham solo project that we'd all end up playing on, until before our eyes it was transformed into a Fleetwood Mac album."

This time was different, however, even though the motions, at first, seemed to be the same. "We all played on both Lindsey's and Stevie's records, so I thought nothing had changed. But as time stretched on, something didn't feel right. Still, I was not prepared for that blow: essentially the realization that I no longer had a band. I've had a band—this band—since 1967. With all else coming apart in my life, it was not something I was prepared

to stomach. But like the other guys, I'm getting over it." He takes another of the long, thoughtful pauses that characterize his speech. Fleetwood is a man who talks easily, but before he says anything of significance, he weighs his words deliberately, his dulcet baritone rolling out in crisp, clipped King's English. "The act of getting over this shock has proven to be a great catalyst in changing my life for the first time in decades. It inspired me to say, finally, 'Enough is enough.' For the first time ever I have refused to do what I've done in the past—anything it took to make a Fleetwood Mac album and tour happen. I was always the one to jump through hoops, to get down and beg, to play the fool or be as charming as I could. I literally did whatever was needed to keep the band moving forward. But not anymore."

It's easy to see how Fleetwood successfully played the role of cheerleader, organizer and crusader. His excitement is tangible when he is consumed with a topic, be it past-life regression therapy, Indian food, African music, politics, local ukulele sensation Nick Acosta or his theories about the likelihood of an apocalyptic pandemic destroying the human race. He is engaging in conversation, and for someone who has seen it all, lost it all and got it back (then lost it and got it back again), he's never jaded, world-weary or bitter.

In fact, Fleetwood sees his greatest character flaw as the impetus of his musical legacy. "I'm addicted to co-dependent relationships at every level," he says. "My main co-dependency has always been

Fleetwood Mac, and I haven't been able to detach myself from it since day one. A lot of co-dependents—the caretakers—suffer more than the others because they are more deeply vested in the co-dependency. I've been very proficient at creating those situations for myself for as long as I can remember. It's just what I do—usually I'm the one giving all I have. And it's not necessarily a bad thing. I was fine accepting that type of co-dependence in order to create a platform that I knew was fundamentally good. I had faith in the result, so I didn't care what the cost was to me. If you think about it, I don't function in a musical sense unless I have a band, so by nature, as a drummer, I am co-dependent." He looks sidelong and shoots me one of those trademark wild-eyed grins.

Peter Green is on Fleetwood's mind a lot these days, not only because Fleetwood regards him as his long-lost brother and misses him every day but because Green taught him that when faced with trials, a musician should stay in touch with his medium. "I never got over Peter, because he set such a high standard for me as a fellow player and as a person. He was so extraordinarily different from anyone I'd ever met. When his illness set in, he grew his nails so he wouldn't be able to play guitar, because in his mind he'd been too privileged in life. He'd been brought up well-to-do and had gotten a boarding school education and was on his way to a successful musical career. He came to believe he deserved none of it, so he denied himself all of it. He stopped playing the guitar for a long time, and this is someone who had played each and every day. Later he went back to

it, because it is a part of him as much as his arm is, and in the end the guitar saved his life. It grounded him, as much as that is possible, considering his condition. That is why I've been playing drums as much as possible during this period. Getting on the drums is like going to a spa for me. It keeps me from being too preoccupied with my... transitions, if you like. It keeps me from controlling it all too much, as well as getting out of control and making incorrect decisions. Playing drums keeps me from being needy and from sliding into old habits, from perpetuating circumstances that will draw me in and weaken me on this journey. Playing has been the great equalizer for me more than ever, and I love that."

Fleetwood has had a few island bands over the years, all of which have featured an array of talented musicians who call Maui home. Hawaii, despite its welcoming sense of aloha, isn't the kind of community outsiders can just waltz into, no matter who they are. A sense of cultural deference goes a long way here, and that is something Fleetwood understood from the start. As the only son of a British air force officer, he'd lived in foreign lands and among diverse cultures, in Egypt and Norway, before he'd reached his teens. "Quite a lot of people in my position come here to the island and don't participate in local culture at all," he says. "That is their choice. They are free to come sit in their big houses and not leave anything behind. But I see that as taking without giving, and I don't want to be that. It doesn't behoove me as a musician, especially, when there are so many great players about. I consider myself a visitor here, even though I'm not at all anymore. That is just how I was brought up, traveling with my family as my father was reassigned every three years. We were taught to behave as guests in foreign countries, because that is what we were."

Fleetwood began visiting Maui regularly 40 years ago, the first time after completing *Fleetwood Mac*, the band's first album with Buckingham and Nicks. "The moment I set foot on this island I had...a thing. I literally felt like I'd lived in Maui all my life and that I'd finally come home."

As he spent more and more time on the island over the years, he began to explore the local scene, befriending legends like Willie K, a massive Hawaiian guitarist of the Hendrix variety. "I remember going to see Willie in the 1980s, and he blew my mind. He was wild, just a complete freak, playing down in a bar in Lahaina. Paul McCartney saw him that year too and said he was the greatest unknown talent he knew of." In addition to Willie and bassist Lenny Castellanos, Fleetwood met Gretchen Rhodes, a powerful singer who gave Fleetwood a demo when she was working in an Indian clothing shop. "Usually those kinds of things don't work out," he says. "It didn't hurt that she is completely gorgeous, which at least assured that her CD would get a listen. My tour manager and I didn't expect to get the full package of looks and talent, but we sure did with Gretchen. She's amazing."

He's had a loose consortium of players with whom he's toured under two monikers, Mick Fleetwood's Island Rumours Band and the Mick Fleetwood Blues Band.



"To think I used to get punished for sucking my thumb!"

The current incarnation of the Blues Band is heavy on Hammond organ, and it's downright sleazy funk, somewhat like Miles Davis, sans trumpet. It's great jammy head-trip music, more like Fleetwood Mac's earliest days than anything from the Buckingham-Nicks era. Fleetwood plans to record this band and tour locally, and perhaps in Europe as well.

He's got another project afoot that will fulfill a lifelong dream of his. He's opening a restaurant in Lahaina called Fleetwood's On Front Street, which will be both an eclectic gastropub and a top-notch performance space. It makes complete sense, because the man is one hell of a host, moving easily between intelligent conversation and a seemingly endless trove of well-told stories. "I've wanted my own club since I was 12 or 13," he says. "When I got serious about the drums, my parents set me up in a little cement shed we had behind our house, and I turned it into a club." He did a good enough job that he began to charge the kids in the neighborhood admission. "I was enthralled by the beatnik scene I witnessed when I visited my sister at university. Listening to Mose Allison, looking at all these women with big breasts and curvy bodies, some of them modeling naked as an art installation—that was it for me. So I did my version. I got some fish netting up on the wall and strung empty wine bottles from it. I'd serve the kids Coca-Cola, and I brought the family record player down and set up my drums way back in the corner in the shadows. I'd charge them to listen to me play along to Buddy Holly records, and I had the time of my life. As my wife, Lynn, often told me, I don't let go of my dreams. This being one of them, I'm opening my childhood club here in Maui."

It will be family oriented and have modern English pub decor, but it will be far from stuffy. "The last thing I want is for people to think they don't dare come in wearing a pair of shorts with suntan lotion on. I want them to feel that it's perfectly fine to get suntan lotion on our leather couches." For the fans there will be a small area devoted to Mick memorabilia, but it will in no way be what he calls "the Mausoleum of Mick Fleetwood."

"If you create a band," Fleetwood says, "it's like creating a religion. Rather than staying in one place and giving your sermons, you become a traveling preacher. I see the restaurant as me building a cathedral for all the traveling preachers I know to come and spread the gospel. And besides that, selfishly I've built myself a stage to play on any day of the week." Another impish grin lights up his face. "I really can't wait to open our doors."

As the sun begins to set, Fleetwood takes a walk around the grounds, up to the guest cabin, built from local logs in the 1970s, which he restored two years ago. It has an authentic wood-burning stove and a collection of vintage radios, and other than the flatscreen on the wall, it could be a secluded hunter's getaway. As we approach, as if on cue, a clucking pheasant rustles the brush and runs along the grass before flying back

into the cover of the trees. I'm no zoologist, but the bird seems out of place; then again I'm somehow on an English estate in the tropics. "You're right, pheasants are not indigenous to Hawaii, but they are now," Fleetwood says. "A few imperial-era English settlers brought deer and pheasant here strictly for sport. There are plenty of them on my property, and just so you know, it's legal to hunt them freely if that interests you."

In the closets and in the storage shed next door hang racks of the custom-made velvet suits Fleetwood has donned over the years, all of them aristocratic shades of purple, red and green. There is also a set of the wooden balls he typically attaches to his belt by way of accessorizing said suits. "Those are not a very veiled symbol," he says, smirking. "When John, Peter and I first started the band, we were ridiculous. We wanted to stand out from all the other Englishmen playing traditional blues, so we never held back. I used to play with a massive black dildo stuck to the top of my bass drum so the thing would wiggle front and center through the entire set. We used to cover Elvis, and for John's number he'd pull his bass up high and put that thing through his zipper. He'd

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be there doing Elvis's hubba-hubba routine with this massive black cock hanging out of his trousers. That little gag almost got us killed by the sheriff's department when we played some Christian college in Texas."

Fleetwood loves this cabin. He's cleared several tall trees that blocked the view to the ocean, and he often spends nights up here on the pullout couch instead of on the California king in the master bedroom. "The cabin is a sanctuary within a sanctuary to me. I can be the only one in the house, but still some nights I'd rather be here than over there," he says, gesturing down the hill.

Fleetwood has been introspective of late, thinking of those still with him and those who have passed on. And when he finds himself in a sentimental mood, he comes to this cabin to be alone with his thoughts. "I've been thinking about George Harrison more than ever since he died," he says. "We were more than just brothers-in-law for a time; he was one of the very best friends I've ever had. We both loved Maui and Hawaii equally, because we both understood how special this place is. His song 'Cloud 9' really captures how he felt about this place, and I find myself thinking of the line 'I'll see you there on cloud nine' when I think about how much I miss him. George is the reason

I'm playing ukulele lately too. He was such a great player, and he was obsessed with it. He used to drive around Maui with literally 20 of the things in his trunk, handing them out to friends, hawking the wares of this local guy who made them."

Though Fleetwood's wife and children are moving into the family's Los Angeles home now that the couple is divorcing, Fleetwood will not live here alone: He plans to move his 95-year-old mother up-country and sell the beachside property. "Mom is an angel. She is a very vibrant woman. Her eyesight is nearly gone, but it doesn't stop her at all," he says. "She was in the studio with me the other day. She was dancing, spinning around and banging on a tambourine. I take her swimming three days a week and out to dinner. I'm so lucky to still have my mother at my age that I get as much time with her as I possibly can."

Up in the cabin, Mick also visits with his father, despite the fact that Wing Commander Fleetwood died in 1978. The senior Fleetwood was more than just a decorated leader in the Royal Air Force; he was also a writer, and though he never published a book, at the encouragement of his son he recorded his best short stories for posterity. "Dad was very humble. He wrote on his own and didn't really make the push to get published as hard as he could have. Before he died, I bought him a recorder and insisted he read dozens of these stories he'd been writing for my decade so I'd have them for the rest of my life," he says. "Dad was a dreamer, like I am, which is clear from his writing. He had a dreamy Irish manner of speaking and storytelling and, similarly, that same Irish idealism that led him to feel he could have done more and tried harder to make the world a better place in his lifetime. He never bragged about anything he'd done, though he did so much." Fleetwood pauses, visibly choked up. "He'd nurtured troops through war and saved countless lives. In his retirement he became a craftsman who repaired anything that anyone in the neighborhood needed fixed. But he never felt he'd done enough, and toward the end of his life, he became...almost bitter about it."

Fleetwood says quietly, "I think of Dad a lot now because this period of time for me is about being honestly vulnerable. One of the great misconceptions we have as human beings—men especially—is that being vulnerable is a position of weakness. Quite the contrary, it's a place of strength. In my experience, being vulnerable is like a profound stillness. The only way I'd ever gotten there in the past was through extremity. When I'd been up and out of my mind on cocaine for eight days straight, I would arrive at this frame of mind, and I got to know it and like it quite well. It was an out-of-body experience in which I would transcend my earthly shell. I would be disarmed completely and enter a meditative state that came only after I had disintegrated everything around me and become so deconstructed that I ended up totally in sync with the universe and myself. I'm not making excuses for getting loaded, but I had a process and I did what I had to do to get into a zone where I felt connected."

In those moments when it all became crystal clear, there were only two things Fleetwood wanted to hear: recordings of Peter Green playing guitar and of his father reciting his stories, both of which made him feel deeply alive. "I've spent time on many psychiatrists' couches and never said anything to them other than 'I'm okay.' I wasn't capable of explaining more or of accessing those feelings any further. That is probably why back then I needed to go to such lengths. Thankfully I don't need to put myself through those paces anymore to get in touch with my emotions."

No, it's pretty clear, even if you spend just five minutes with him, that Mick Fleetwood is in touch. As an older and wiser wild man of 64, he has finally let himself off the hook in order to become all that he can be. Impossible as it sounds coming from someone who has sold tens of millions of albums and whose music has defined and influenced four decades of rock and roll, Fleetwood says he's only just accepted the idea that he's good at his job, and I believe him. "I still find it hard to say without reservation that I'm a good drummer. I see my career as a case of someone becoming good out of necessity. I learned to function with very little," he says, "which was a side effect of tirelessly plugging away. I see myself more as a guy who happens to play drums than a natural-born drummer who also happens to be a guy. It's very liberating to look at myself in the mirror that way. Taking that step back has allowed me to understand that, for the style I play, which has everything to do with soul and feel and nuance, I'm actually quite good."

He stands up and walks to the edge of the porch, staring down at the pink-and-orange sunset leaking across the horizon and coloring the valley miles below. "I don't feel like I have a band anymore, and I don't have those relationships that defined me, those things I was a junkie for. They're all gone...but now I have all the energy I've instinctually spent on others all to myself. And I've got more than enough ideas to keep me busy. The Fleetwood Mac legacy does not end here at all. There are avenues I'm investigating to bring it into the future while respecting the past, everything from film projects to a line of accessories and furniture for the home. I look at my life now as a new start, as a chance to be here now, as the saying goes, to be in the right location at the right time in the right way. After all I've seen in this life, I keep returning to a simple idea: As long as you can walk out your door and feel lucky to be where you are, you are blessed. If you obtain that sense of self in your lifetime in any way, shape or form, consider yourself lucky, because so many people never get there. I can say honestly that I have nothing at all to complain about. Not just because I'm standing here in paradise but because I'm in a place where I know I should be within—and what's more, I'm *aware* of it. I ask you to tell me, what else could any person want than that?"

