

Traffic – Welcome To The Canteen (1971)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Medicated Goo* (Steve Winwood, Jimmy Miller) - 3:34 02. *Sad And Deep As You* (Dave Mason) - 3:48 03. *40,000 Headmen* (Winwood, Jim Capaldi) - 6:18 [play](#) 04. *Shouldn't Have Took More Than You Gave* (Mason) - 5:36

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05. *Dear Mr. Fantasy* (Winwood, Capaldi, Chris Wood) - 10:53 06. *Gimme Some Lovin'* (Winwood, Davis) - 9:00

Personnel: - Steve Winwood - vocals, organ, electric piano, guitar - Chris Wood - saxophone, flute, electric piano, organ - Jim Capaldi - drums, tambourine, percussion, backing vocals - Dave Mason - vocals, lead guitar, acoustic guitar - Jim Gordon - drums - Rebop Kwaku Baah - congas, timbales, bongos - Ric Grech – bass

Following the success of John Barleycorn Must Die, Traffic planned a concert album for the fall of 1970, and it got as far as a test pressing before being canceled. A recording was necessary to satisfy the terms of British label Island records' licensing deal with American label United Artists, which had provided for five albums, of which four had been delivered. With Island starting to release its own albums in the U.S., the UA contract had to be completed, and hopefully not with the potentially lucrative studio follow-up to John Barleycorn Must Die. Thus, Traffic tried again to come up with a live album by recording shows on a British tour in July 1971. Joining for six dates of the tour was twice-dismissed Traffic singer/guitarist Dave Mason, who had subsequently scored a solo success with his *Alone Together* album. The resulting collection, *Welcome to the Canteen* (which was technically credited to the seven individual musicians, not to Traffic), proved how good a contractual obligation album could be. Sound quality was not the best, with the vocals under-recorded and stray sounds honing in, but the playing was exemplary, and the set list was an excellent mixture of old Traffic songs and recent Mason favorites. "Dear Mr. Fantasy" got an extended workout, and the capper was a rearranged version of Steve Winwood's old Spencer Davis Group hit "Gimme Some Lovin'." *Welcome to the Canteen's* status as only a semi-legitimate offering was emphasized by the release, after a mere two months, of a new Traffic studio album on Island (*The Low Spark of High Heeled Boys*) that undercut its sales. But that doesn't make it any less appealing as a summing up of the Winwood/Mason/Traffic musical world. ---William Ruhlmann, AllMusic

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Review

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