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Kinks Kommentary: CD, DVD, And Live Reviews

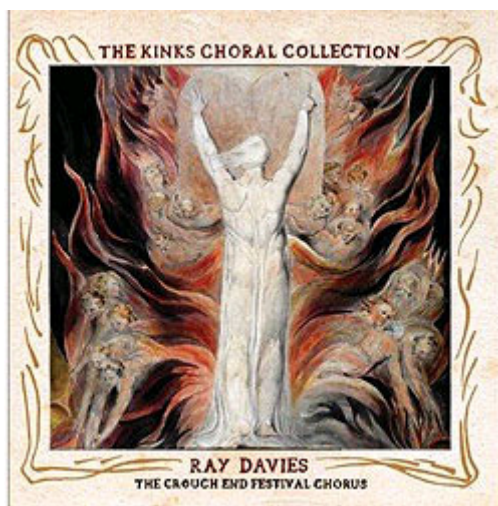
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By Julie Finley

My fandom with the Kinks goes back as far as pre-school age. They are the reason I love and obsess over music as much as I do, and they raised the bar of excellence for my tastes to follow throughout my life.

They are not a recent fad with me. I didn't decide they were great once I heard *The Village Green Preservation Society*, like bullshitting journalists out there claim to give themselves street-cred. I even obsessed over them during the '80s when it wasn't cool to like them! So, my reviews come from a lifetime commitment of love and knowledge. . . which are going to be exceedingly honest. The following reviews are listed in chronological order based upon when I first observed them.

Ray Davies, *The Kinks Choral Collection*



This is a collection of Kinks songs rearranged by Ray and performed with a choral group known as the Crouch End Festival Chorus. The roster tends to be heavier on the more harmonized Kinks songs, with a few rock ones for good measure.

The results are mixed: some work absolutely beautifully, and others don't. Some are flawless: "Days," "Waterloo Sunset," "Victoria," "See My Friends," "Celluloid Heroes," "Village Green," "Big Sky," "Do You Remember Walter?" "Johnny Thunder," and the jaw-droppingly exquisite "Shangri-la."

Of course, there are some that sound absolutely ridiculous: "You Really Got Me," "Working Man's Café," "Picture Book," "Village Green Preservation Society," and "All Day and All of the Night." The reasons are because choral groups tend to sound stupid with rock songs or because they used the chorus too much where the lyrics become awash and you can't understand them.

Kinks' songs have such resplendent and intricate lyrics, that they NEED to be heard; that's why they were so amazing to begin with. The other faux pas would be the corny sound of the men's choral voices in some parts, although the women's aren't as bad. I do prefer to hear Ray and Dave harmonizing together, anyway.

However, this album does have some very ravishing moments. [Here is a live clip](#) of the greatness that is "Shangri-la" on YouTube that I feel is required viewing amongst Kinks fans.

Ray Davies: Live at The Lorain Palace Theatre, Lorain OH, March 12, 2010

This concert was advertised as having the Crouch End Festival Chorus that is present on Ray's latest release, but there was no chorus whatsoever. This was slightly disappointing because I don't like when something is promoted as being one thing, and you get there expecting it, and it's not! It's just misleading. . . but at any rate, I was there to see Ray first and foremost!

For whatever reason, this event attracted a lot of drunken morons and rednecks (I'm still trying to figure out how any of them had the intellectual capacity to interpret Ray's lyrics in the first place), and where I sat, it seemed that the most obnoxious people in the audience were sitting directly behind me. They were yelling and spilling their beer and popcorn all over the place, and trying to start trouble. Luckily, cops and security threw them out halfway through.

During the first half of the show, I could barely hear anything above the noise of the Cro Mags sitting behind me (which made me want to leave immediately), but after the scum were thrown out, the show became much better. When Ray whipped out one of my all-time favorites, "Two Sisters," I truly started to enjoy the show.

The opening group (I believe they were called The 88) backed Ray for the last seven or eight songs, which was really good. They were lame as an opening act, but they played off of Ray quite well. The first half seemed too much like a farty, acoustic Bob Dylan-esque show, but once I got used to that format, it was good.

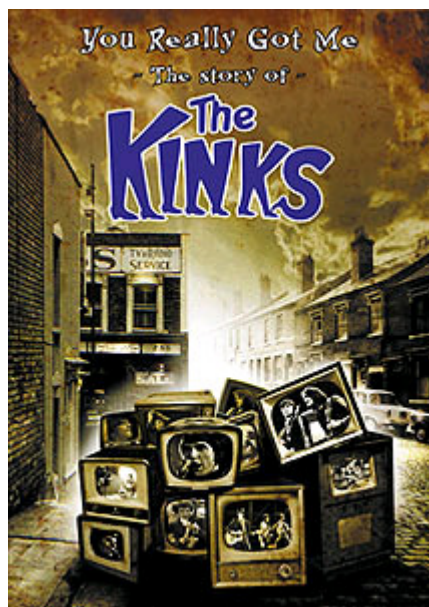


Photo © 2010 Janet Macoska

I have to say, though, the last time I had seen Ray perform was in the early '90s; I was a teenager and he and his brother Dave were still touring as The Kinks. The reality of hearing Kinks songs played live, but without both brothers, was sort of a letdown. They really need to put their differences aside, and get back to business! Although Ray's accompanying guitarist was good, it wasn't Dave and like I said earlier, I miss their harmonies. I feel like I'm being too over-critical, but that's because mentally I was comparing it to what it was like seeing The Kinks when I was younger. . . but that's just it. . . THEY were also younger!

Ray is no spring-chicken: he's a senior-citizen and has had a heart attack as well as being the victim of a shooting whilst living in New Orleans. In essence, he's lucky to be still alive, and I am lucky to have gotten to see him at all! But for an old guy, he still has his wit and charisma; he even threw in some big stage jumps at the end! I did feel bad for him when he went to shake someone's hand and he lost his balance and fell off of the stage. Luckily he didn't seem terribly injured by it, and got back up there and kept going. So the show started rough, and then got much better. However, if I were Ray I'd never play the Cleveland area again since the audience sucks.

The Kinks, You Really Got Me: The Story of the Kinks



This is a brand new documentary, and I was very excited to get an advance copy. HOWEVER, it may have been the worst documentary I've ever watched! This DVD is a real injustice to the band, so buyers beware: don't waste your time or money on it!

Basically, *You Really Got Me* takes almost the entirety of 1979's *One For the Road* concert video from the Providence Civic Center, adds the '80s video compilation *Come Dancing With The Kinks*, plus the DVD compilation of their performances on a German TV show called *Beat Beat Beat*, and then sticks in a few low quality clips from YouTube and some bland voiceover telling you bullshit you already probably knew about the band. This stuff isn't very informative; it sounds like the first paragraph from The Kinks' Wikipedia page.

There are various clips from an interview thrown in that you can tell weren't filmed exclusively for the DVD, and the sound/video quality/editing are shitty! There even are parts wherein the voiceover distorts and you can't understand what is being said. It is truly ridiculous, and a total dishonor to the band. It's painful to watch, and I don't recommend it to anyone. The only plus is that I got a promo copy and didn't have to pay for it.

You Really Got Me: The Story Of The Kinks was released May 18 by Voiceprint and MVD Visual and is available to order through [See Of Sound](#). You can order *The Kinks Choral Collection* via Ray Davies' [website](#). For summer tour dates, check out the [Tour Details section](#).



3 Responses to “Kinks Kommentary: CD, DVD, And Live Reviews”

1. *Neon Sign* Says:
[May 31st, 2010 at 12:07 pm](#)

Ray Davies DID NOT have a heart attack. I can't imagine where you got that idea.

2. *Julie Finley* Says:
[May 31st, 2010 at 7:48 pm](#)

Author's note:

The info about Ray having a heart attack, I heard it on a local radio in Upstate NY in the mid 90's. I never doubted it, so I believed it even if it was possibly not true, and it sort-of filed in the back of my mind. If its incorrect, I apologize for the mis-information.

3. *Paul Horvath* Says:
[June 1st, 2010 at 3:49 pm](#)

Ray did have heart problems while still with the Kinks in the 90's and rumour has it had a by pass operation. Details may be on Dave Emlens website. Somewhere I have UK press clippings from the time. As with a lot of things Kinks who knows, it may be misinfo but may not.

Paulh Bradford England. Long live the Davies brothers and the band members.

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