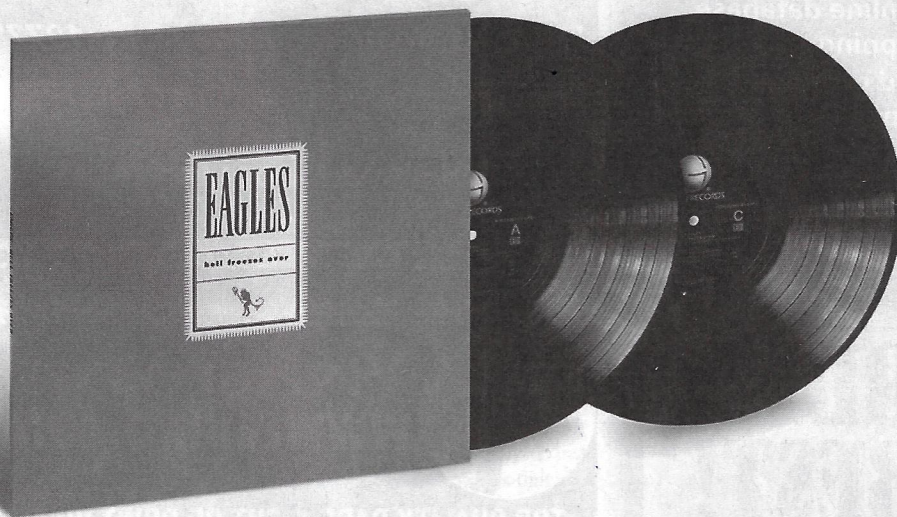


# REVIEWS

MUSIC RELEASES TO CONSIDER FOR YOUR COLLECTION



## THE EAGLES HELL FREEZES OVER (25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION)

Geffen/UMe (2-LP)

★★★★★

Most reissues are augmented with a few previously unreleased gems designed to tip the scale toward a purchase. On the 25th anniversary of The Eagles reunion record *Hell Freezes Over*, Geffen/UMe have kept things simple.

This high-grade vinyl version was remastered, note for note by Bob Ludwig, and after the first spin it becomes clear that this was all that was required. The sonic adjustments noticeably improve what was already a very tight collection of music. A great spin just got even better.

The original sessions for *Hell Freezes Over* took place in April of 1994 at Warner Burbank Studios and featured the band's *Long Run*-era lineup of musicians. It spent two weeks at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 and ultimately sold over nine million copies. The Eagles, who have long been

known for carefully re-creating their studio recordings in concert, had not previously captured that discipline on tape. Their 1980 live double album was more of a mess. Recorded over four years, with different lineups, in multiple venues the collection does not hold together very well. *Hell Freezes Over* is more of a studio release than a live rendition of well-known songs which makes this remaster a tastier item to dig into.

I chose to spin it on two different systems. The first was on a Thorens TD-160 powered through a McIntosh C-28 preamp and a M250 amp. This late '60s/early '70s gear proved their long standing reputation for warmth and great sonic depth relaying a remarkable amount of clarity. While the original recording was slick the digital reproduction on the CD format always felt a bit flat, especially on rockers like "Take It Easy." On this remastered edition the acoustic guitar strums are separated evenly, with nothing falling into what can only be described as a "blur." There was a bit of distance in that song's left

channel guitar solo, but that might be the only technical glitch to be found in the entire record.

What really stands out on this record are the ballads. There the recording truly sounds live. Crispness can be found at the end of every verse making the record even more intimate than it was before. This remained true on the second listening. There on a late '70s Rega Planar 2 powered through a NAD C-352 pre-amp and an Adcom 5006 amp, the sound delivers the same exceptional clarity, less a good amount of the honey that McIntosh is known for. That was to be expected.

In total, the remaster works on so many levels. What it could never fix was the sub-marginal material that populates the first side of the record. Those once new songs still fall flat today. It's hard to believe that after a 14-year separation these members didn't arrive with new

material that picked up where they famously left off. What's great about the vinyl version is that you can ignore that side entirely and instead get right to the gold, a good amount of which is here ready to be mined.

— Ray Chelstowski

## JOHNNY THUNDERS MADRID MEMORY

Cleopatra (CD/DVD)

★★★

This CD/DVD combo set documents a show in Madrid on June 14, 1984, the same Heartbreakers reunion tour that saw the recording of the *Live at the Lyceum* album. It's a straightforward presentation of a show originally filmed for broadcast on Spanish TV, complete with a long spoken intro by someone presumably associated with the program (no subtitles or identifying captions are provided).

The band walks on stage to sounds of crashing thunder, then blast straight into "Pipeline," and the 17-song set is an eclectic mix of songs by the New York Dolls, Thunders' solo material and the occasional cover tune. For the most part, it's edited in old school fashion; meaning, none of the frantic rapid-fire cutting you get into

today's live videos. Though the footage isn't entirely complete; there are sudden jumps in the songs, where footage either didn't exist (or was too damaged?), the sudden cuts covered by the

superimposition of some cheesy "fire effects."

By this point, the tour had also become something of a New York Dolls reunion, as a departing Walter Lure (he had



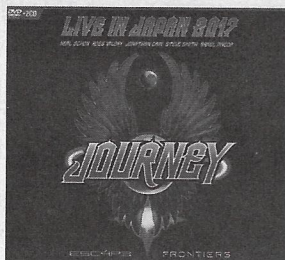
to go back to his day job) was replaced by Sylvain Sylvain, making the lineup for this show Johnny Thunders, Sylvain Sylvain, Jerry Nolan and Billy Rath. The Dolls' "Personality Crisis" is a great choice to follow "Pipeline,"

pumping with energy, and the band also takes Sylvain's "14th Street Beat" for a spin. "Sad Vacation" injects a mournful note into the proceedings; it was Thunders' tribute to his late friend, Sid Vicious. But an unexpected cover of the instrumental "Green Onions" gets the band right back into a more mellow groove.

The main set comes to a close with the Heartbreakers' lively "Born Too Loose." Then, following audience interviews (again without subtitles), comes a surprise; a four song acoustic set, with Thunders accompanied by an unknown guitarist, beginning with a somewhat ragged "Eve of Destruction." The show comes to a melancholy close with "You Can't Put Your Arms Around a Memory."

The songs are all played competently enough, but the band never really seems completely energized, to the point that someone in the audience shouts "Wake up!" at Thunders. Nonetheless, Thunders/Heartbreakers/New York Dolls fans will undoubtedly want to add this to their collections. Note: there's also a vinyl edition on "splatter vinyl!"

— Gillian G. Gaar



**JOURNEY**  
LIVE IN JAPAN 2017:  
ESCAPE + FRONTIERS  
Eagle Rock Entertainment  
(DVD+2-CD, Blu-ray+2-CD)

★★★★★

To celebrate the 35th anniversary of their mega-platinum LP *Escape*, Journey took to the stage at Japan's legendary Budokan arena in early 2017 to perform the album in its entirety, along with

nearly all the follow-up, 1983's *Frontiers*. All the AOR-heavy action is captured on the entertaining *Live in Japan 2017: Escape + Frontiers*, released on DVD+2-CD and Blu-ray+2-CD.

The 26-song set is performed by longtime band members Neil Schon (guitar), Jonathan Cain (keyboards/rhythm guitar), Ross Valory (bass), Steve Smith (drummer, who returned to the fold in 2016), and Arnel Pineda (lead vocals); all but Pineda, of course, appeared on the original *Escape* and *Frontiers* albums back in the day. Pineda does an admirable job of replacing former lead vocalist Steve Perry, hitting all the requisite high notes and exhorting the Budokan crowd throughout. Pineda is no longer "the new guy" in the band, having been with Journey since 2007, or, as Ross Valory informs the crowd at the close of the set, "longer than any other singer." Pineda's extremely Steve Perry-like vocal gymnastics on "Faithfully" is just one of the performances that wows the assembled here.

The band is spot-on as they run through Journey classics such as the omnipresent "Don't Stop Believin'" (which kicks off the set), the power ballads "Faithfully" and "Open Arms," the punchy rocker "Separate Ways" and the Top 10 hit "Who's Crying Now." Schon solos and shreds all over the place, stopping just short of self-indulgence, while Cain's keyboard flourishes and Smith's often jazz-influenced drumming are highlights. The camera crew does an excellent job of capturing the ensemble playing, while the video direction is nicely paced.

The band is able to breathe new life into the hits while also pulling out relative obscurities such as the energetic "Dead or Alive" and the soaring "Lay it Down," the latter being one of three tunes more than ably sung by auxiliary musician Travis Thibodaux. Oddity: the only song not performed from either of the two albums is "Troubled Child" from *Frontiers*.

The set concludes with two tunes not included on *Escape* or *Frontiers*: "La Raza del Sol" (originally a B-side from the *Escape* era) is stretched out to an extended, 13-minute Latin-flavored jam which Neil Schon introduces

as harkening back to his days with Santana; and the classic "Lovin', Touchin', Squeezin'" which works perfectly as a hands-in-the-air, singalong finale (and which features some instrumental bits of Joe Walsh's "Rocky Mountain Way" tossed in for good measure). While it probably won't win them many new fans, *Live in Japan 2017* proves that nearly 40 years after their commercial heyday, Journey can still deliver the goods in a live setting.

— John M. Borack

**ARCH / MATHEOS**  
WINTER ETHEREAL  
Metal Blade Records (CD)

★★★★

This year has seen a resurgence for progressive metal, as two of the genre's pioneering bands, Dream Theater and Queensrÿche, have put out excellent new releases. If there's a third band that belongs in the holy trinity of prog metal, it's Fates Warning, a contemporary of the aforementioned two that has been going since 1982. And while

## QUICK PICKS

BY GILLIAN G. GAAR



**PROFESSOR LONGHAIR**  
LIVE ON THE QUEEN MARY  
Harvest/MPL (LP, CD)

**Genre:** Blues

On March 24, 1975, Paul and Linda McCartney hosted a party on the Queen Mary, docked in Long Beach, California. The occasion was the end of recording sessions for Wings' *Venus and Mars* sessions, and as the sessions had been held in New Orleans, who better to provide the music than blues legend Professor Longhair? Here's the very performance that dazzled the star-studded gathering (which included fellow ex-Beatle George Harrison).

**CHRIS SALEWICZ**  
JIMMY PAGE:  
THE DEFINITIVE BIOGRAPHY  
Da Capo Press (Hardback)

**Genre:** Hard Rock

A first rate biography, covering the entire breadth of Page's career. Naturally, Led

Zepelin takes up most of the story, with Page portrayed as that band's primary driving force. But Salewicz doesn't neglect Page's crucial early years, as well as the post-Zepelin era, and a close examination of Page's well-known interest in the occult.

**JOHN HARTFORD**  
BACKROADS,  
RIVERS & MEMORIES  
Real Gone Music (CD)

**Genre:** Country, Bluegrass

"Gentle on My Mind" is enough to secure Hartford's place in music history, and this release is real treasure trove for his fans. Most of the songs are previously unreleased demos (including one of "Gentle"), and there are also very rare singles from his Ozark Mountain Trio days ("Greenback Dollar" is a highlight).

**MARTIN POPOFF**  
QUEEN: ALBUM BY ALBUM  
Voyageur Press (Hardback)

**Genre:** Classic Rock

Popoff elicits comments from a variety of music industry insiders about every Queen album. High profile contributors include Paul McCartney, Dee Snider, David Ellefson (Megadeth), and Queen producer Reinhold Mack. In an interesting twist, two of the contributors (Patrick Myers and Nina Noir) are Freddie Mercury impersonators.