

CD+DVD Reviews

It's a Beautiful Day 1968 – Live at the Fillmore – Classic Music Vault CD + DVD

A most enjoyable combo of performances of the band over three periods plus 80 minutes of their hits on a CD.



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**It's a Beautiful Day 1968 – Live at the Fillmore [TrackList follows] – Classic Music Vault CD + DVD
CMV0220 (CD: 79:36, DVD: 41:00) [8/6/13] ****½:**

(David LaFlamme – violin, vocals; Patti Santos – vocals, percussion; Linda Neska LaFlamme – keyboards; Mitchell Holman – bass; Val Fuentes – drums)

It's a Beautiful Day was one of the top groups in the San Francisco rock movement, and 1968 was a special year for them. Joel Selvin, pop reviewer for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, introduces them in the video by talking about how astonishing they sounded and underscores how important they were in rock history. The DVD is titled *The David LaFlamme Story* and might be better to view first. It is a mix of older 4:3 and recently-shot 16:9 color footage, and locations are not just SF's Fillmore West but also some shot at a venue in Petaluma. The band really made it following their being the last-minute opening act for Cream at the Oakland Coliseum in 1968. The sound is quite good on these live video performances and on some 4:3 aspect ratio material the edges are repeated to bring the image out to fill up 16:9 screens. Even the early videos are not nearly as poor as on some recent rock performance DVDs.

The most interesting part of the DVD was that it cut together the band's performances from 1968 with some taped in the '70s plus some shot just recently, in 2012. David LaFlamme reveals that he's now in his 70s, and the changes in his appearance over the years and that of his wife Linda are...well, interesting. The DVD also has interesting interview material in between the music with David himself, Barry Melton of Country Joe & the Fish, and Peter Albin of Big Brother & The Holding Company, and others.

It's a Beautiful Day's sound centered around the amplified violin and vocals of David LaFlamme. An LA critic called LaFlamme "the Jimi Hendrix of the violin." Their music was quite different from the other groups of the period: mixing classical, jazz, blues, rock, world music and folk. Some of their tunes had a sort of Arabian Nights feeling about them. They espoused a sort of "happily ever after world." Their huge hit was "White Bird," and of course it's on both the CD and the DVD. LaFlamme tells how people frequently told him their child was conceived during "White Bird." I'd forgotten about this band and enjoyed their double album very much. Brought back some memories of that period. Nice to know they're still at it unabated, like the Moody Blues and The Stones, but they do look a lot better today than

the Stones.

TrackList, CD: Love for You, Bulgaria, White Bird, Wasted Union Blues, Time Is, Countryside, Bombay Calling, Changes, Girl with No Eyes, Hot Summer Day.

—John Henry



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