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Music DVD Review: Gregg Allman - I'm No Angel: Live on Stage

By Rhetta Akamatsu, BLOGCRITICS.ORG  
Published 11:13 pm, Tuesday, December 11, 2012

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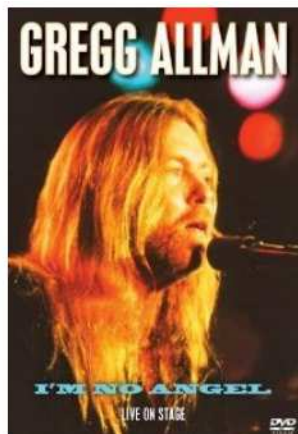
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Recently Cherry Red Records Limited released the DVD *Gregg Allman: I'm No Angel*. The video is of a November 1988 concert at [The Cannery](#) in Nashville, Tennessee. The band included former [Allman Brothers Band](#) members [Dan Toler](#) on guitar, [David Toler](#) on drums, as well as Bruce Waibel on bass, [Tim Heding](#) on keyboard, and [Charles "Chaz" Trippy](#) on percussion. That particular tour was in support of his *Just Before the Bullets Fly* album. Allman was opening for [Stevie Ray Vaughan](#) on the tour, and so the whole set is less than an hour.

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Some songs are real standouts. "Fear of Falling," from *Just Before the Bullets Fly*, captures the vulnerability and depth of emotion that Allman had with his brother Duane and the other members of the Allman Brothers. It shows that he was capable of capturing that same magic as a solo artist with his own musicians. "I'm No Angel" still has that rough, yet needy, "bad boy" vibe that can be so attractive in blues rock music.

"Statesboro Blues," the Blind Willie McTell classic which was a huge success for The Allman Brothers, does not achieve the guitar virtuosity the late, great Duane Allman provided. It is still a great, gritty rendition with some fine piano from Gregg Allman and Tim Heding. In fact, there may not be another blues musician who can perform this number better than Gregg

Allman always has. "Slip Away" is an excellent version of Clarence Carter's great song, with the yearning vocal full of real pain, perfect for Allman's voice.

Of course, physically Allman was not in good shape in the late '80s. By his own admission, as detailed in his recently released autobiography, this was a time when he was struggling with addictions and his face and body are a bit bloated and he looks tired. But his voice was still one of the most perfect for the blues rock genre. It had been for years before this recording and it still is now.

The sound quality of the DVD is very good. The instruments are all clear, not muddled, and Allman's vocals are distinct. According to the back of the DVD case, if your stereo system supports Dolby Digital 5.1, you can listen to the audio in that format.

On the other hand, the visual quality of this DVD is barely adequate by today's standards. Cherry Red often releases punk and indie music documentaries for budget prices. They do not specialize in high quality video. Watching this one is very much like watching live concerts on late night television in the days before MTV or VH-1. The color is quite dark and the camera angles are extremely limited. The picture is by no means as sharp and clear as modern viewers have come to expect, but it is still worth watching to catch these fine musicians live in concert. It would, in fact, be worth it for the music alone.

Overall, the DVD is well worth buying and viewing if you are a fan of Gregg Allman. It captures a time in his solo history and shares some great music in a live venue.

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