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Bill Nelson LIVE @ Metropolis Studios, London (Dbl CD + DVD) (<http://www.rocksbackpagesblogs.com/bill-nelson-live-metropolis-studios-london-dbl-cd-dvd/>)

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04 Aug 2012



(<http://www.rocksbackpagesblogs.com/2012/08/bill-nelson-live-metropolis-studios-london-dbl-cd-dvd/bnelson-metropolis/>)

I mainly remember Bill Nelson from the Be-Bop Deluxe days of Axe Victim, Futurama & Sunburst Finish back in the mid 1970's. During that period, I was working in the high profile import music business in LA. People in the company loved him; I thought he was quite good. Later in the mid 80's I chanced upon one of his instrumental albums, the double disc Chance Encounters at the Garden of Lights. I was quite impressed, but was on to other things quickly...

Therefore, when I came to his brand new effort, LIVE @ Metropolis Studios, London, in fact I was a relative virgin to what he had been up to all these years. Up top, I must say after watching and listening to all 3 discs I was incredibly impressed. For the third release in the Canadian Company Convexe Entertainment's Live in Metropolis Studios London CD/ DVD series, Nelson and his accompanying band, The Gentleman Rocketeers really put on a show.

The shindig begins with him performing a selection of 4 solo guitar tracks w/ only slight accompaniment. They displayed his diversity guitar mastery mixing nimble fingering, combined with mesmerizing

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melodies to achieve a beautiful effect. Based on this performance, I would rank his "Beyond These Clouds The Sweetest Dream" as one of the most mesmerizing, shimmering melodic guitar explorations I've ever heard. It was not just intellectual noodling and looping that some pass off as music, but liquid-like lead lines, stretched and bent over a dreaming (pre-recorded) synthetic backdrop and accompanied by subtle live ethereal flute and sax embellishment.

He followed that up with a truly stunning guitar display along with the band performing a goodly selection of career highlights that spanned the spectrum of instrumental guitar rock, as well as NOT highly overblown prog-rock. Throughout his playing was inspired and powerful, not simply redundant guitar hero clichés. He mixed heavy lead lines, with power chord melodies, throwing in some nice acoustic guitar at one point. Visually it was a treat as well for he played 14 different guitars, switching between them throughout.

In addition, like the other DVDs in the series, there is a bonus interview and it was here that the intelligence behind the guitar playing shined through. He talked warmly about his first album Northern Dream, recorded in a field during his hippie period, turning down his first record contract offer as he'd moved on and the label wanted to reissue that album, not sign the band. Also, of great interest was how John Peel had gotten a hold of both that first album, and his initial demo single with Be-Bop, playing them to death. The single got the record company knocking on his door a second time. Ultimately, signing him to a deal on his own terms. Topping it all off, he talks about how each year he personally puts on a special thank you festival, playing multiple concerts, giving away prizes and having a jolly good time – for himself and his long supporting fans.

This release as a whole, truly communicated just how music can indeed transcend age and time. In Bill Nelson's case, I missed out the first time. Thankfully, I got a second chance...



About Archie Patterson

Got into the music business in 1970 on FM radio in California, hosting his Eurock radio program. In 1973, created the first issue of Eurock Magazine, which published until 1990. Concurrently helped found two of the leading import music companies in the USA, Intergalactic Trading Co. & Paradox Music. From 1980-2009 Eurock evolved from being one of the first Indie distributors and promoters of Euro Rock with its own D.I.Y. Cassette & CD label into one of the earliest WWW distribution networks. Recently, in 2010, Eurock morphed into a Webzine featuring Multimedia Podcasting, Interviews & Reviews.

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