



EUROPE
Live From the Dark DVD
 Music Video Distributors 2006
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What's the 4-1-1?

The reunited Swedish hard rockers from the 1980's metal period came back with a solid album called *Start From The Dark* in 2004 (2005 for the US release). This DVD is the tour for that album. The 2-disc set is recorded in Dolby Digital and is a Region 0 NTSC formatted set up. The concert was recorded at the Hammersmith Apollo in London England on November 15th, 2004. The bonus disc includes interviews, a documentary, and gear talk, two bonus cuts recorded during the concert's soundcheck, and a lot more.

Genre

Hard Rock / 80's metal / pop metal / rock

The Good

DVD One – The Concert: The sound of the concert is top notch. I'm speaking of both the audio quality and the actual performance itself. I liked how the band changed up the arrangements on some of their classic songs. They gave it a fresh spin without destroying what made the songs so good in the first place. The bluesy intro on "Ready Or Not" was a nice touch. John Norum does a masterful job on guitar. While Joey Tempest's voice has aged over the time the band has been apart, he still retains that superbly melodic tone that won fans the world over. I found it quite refreshing to hear the band not rely so much on sounding like they did in the 1980's but rather they have a more guitar oriented rocking sound.

Keyboardist Mic Michaeli is still a vital component of the band's sound, but Europe really sounds heavier than they ever did in the past. This is most noticeable with John Norum's shredding guitar work and drummer Ian Haugland assaulting the



drums. As for the new material from their *Start From The Dark* CD, it fits in quite nicely with the older material. In the interest of full disclosure, I have not heard the actual CD in its entirety yet. I've heard a couple of songs, but that's it. The live performance of the new stuff is mostly my first brush with these new songs and I came away with a very positive impression.



"Start From The Dark" is one of the songs I have heard previously, and it retains a nice sort of mid-tempo rock feel that made me like it in the first place. I also enjoyed the concert opening "Got To Have Faith" and "Flames." The older stuff that came across best to me was "Rock The Night," "Yesterdaze News" and the solo version of the power ballad "Carrie."

DVD Two – Extra Material: The Behind The Tour documentary was a 23 minute look at 24 hours in the life of the band from the time they get off the stage at their Tilburg Holland (The Netherlands) show until they walk on stage for the DVD concert performance. Normally this kind of thing never comes off well, but I was pleasantly surprised to find myself enjoying this look behind the scenes. The pop up text messages gave some nice context to the history of the band. The Taxi Diaries are interviews with the band members as they drive around London on their way to the show.

They are generally speaking basic interview Q & A's but I thought the one with drummer Ian Haugland was very interesting. It seemed more like a stream of consciousness monologue than an interview. I enjoyed the two soundcheck performances of "Spirit Of The Underdog" and "Heart Of Stone." The videos for "Got To Have Faith" and "Hero" really harkens back to the days of the 80's video explosion. The former is a standard performance piece with some scenic footage woven in. The latter video is a conceptual piece that gives us a look into the very beginnings of Europe. It's more performance footage, but then gives us a set up set in the past with the band members as they meet up and are inspired by their love of Thin Lizzy.

The Bad

DVD One – The Concert: The one real complaint that I had was the look of the concert. The film looked rather grainy throughout the whole show. I wonder if it might've been better to shoot on video rather than film so that the picture was clearer. It serves as a distraction. One other thing I noticed was that it was rather dark throughout the whole show on stage. Sure it's nighttime and a concert, but other than the occasional spotlight action highlighting the band, it seemed the lighting was an issue.

DVD Two – Extra Material: While I'm sure there are plenty of people who are interested in what instruments the band uses in performing or recording the music we love to listen to, I'm not one of them. The gear talk interviews are chalk full of information about the instruments used during the concert, and I couldn't possibly have been more bored. The biography, videography, and discography are all important for newcomers to the band. However, I've never been a fan of reading text material on a DVD.

The Verdict

As a child of the 80's metal movement, Europe was definitely one of my favorite "hair metal" bands. I liked them better than a lot of bands that sold more albums during that decade, including Bon Jovi. I once read a review of a Bon Jovi concert with Europe opening for them that called Europe a "second rate Bon Jovi which essentially makes them a fourth rate band." Nothing could be further from the truth.

The band's songs have stood the test of time to this point and with the new reinventions they have done on those classic tracks and the dynamite new material they are coming out with, I'm looking forward to a great second half of the band's career. The DVD is a wonderful, to quote from Joey Tempest during the show, moment in time. I was put off by the look of the film, but between the concert itself and bonus features that for the most part were well worth watching, this is a great encapsulation of Europe to date!

Did You Know?

During the time Europe was disbanded, singer Joey Tempest recorded 3 solo albums: *A Place To Call Home*, *Azalea Place*, and *Joey Tempest*. Europe was originally called Force.

Rating:  out of 5

[Live from the Dark](#)

Europe

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