



**The Charlie Daniels Band  
Live at Rockplast  
(MVD)**

Now that's what I'm talkin' about! The CDB recorded live in 1980 and aired on German

television. The band was smokin' that night. With Charlie on guitar and fiddle, Tommy Crain on lead guitar, Taz DiGregorio on keys, Charlie Hayward on bass and Freddie Edwards and James Marshall on drums. Wow.

The sound is excellent, as is the video. I was blown away. Fact is, the set includes many of my all time favorite CDB tunes. And the fact that two great friends who so recently left us are brought back to life in their prime -Tommy Crain and Taz- makes it even more special. Man I miss them guys.

Right out of the chute the audience realizes they are in for a treat. as the band comes out with the pedal to the metal with "Funky Junky" and "Trudy" before turning Taz loose on vocals with "Jitterbug."

Next comes "The Legend of Wolley Swamp," one of the band's big Top 40 hits. Another example of what a great storyteller Charlie Daniels is with his songwriting.

What really got to me in every possible way was seeing Tommy sing "Blind Man." Tommy was one of my dearest friends, and even though I didn't know him at the time this film was made, it still rocked all of my emotions. He sings a second song later in the show, one of my favorites, "Cumberland Mountain Number 9." Tommy really tore that one up, with Charlie on fiddle.

The CDB rocks through so many great tunes here, like "El Toreador," "No Potion for the Pain" (once again featuring the bluesy vocal of Taz DiGregorio, who stands and delivers, with so much feeling that at the end of the song he has to pull off his huge cowboy hat and toss his head back like a singer right out of Stax Ewecords), and

a line of hits that includes "In America," "Long Haired Country Boy," "Uneasy Rider," "The South's Gonna Do It Again," and their mega-hit "The Devil Went Down to Georgia."

When the band leaves the stage, they are brought back out by the crowd and Charlie dedicates the encore to the memory of Ronnie Van Zant, and to Tommy Caldwell, who had recently been killed when this was filmed. The song is the official Southern Rock roll call, "The South's Gonn Do It Again." But hey, it ain't over 'til it's over. and Charlie and the boys deliver a wide open in the last lap version of "Orange Blossom Special," clocking in at just shy of nine minutes! Besides the obvious fiddle smoke, the other guys get to take turns soloing, with an awesome piano jam from Taz, some smoldering lead from Tommy, including a romp through "Dixie," with Charlie Hayward and the drum section rocking at maximum intensity. In the pocket with masterful in melodic double leads. That's the sound of Southern Rock. The sound that I love.

- Michael Buffalo Smith

**The Don Ray Band  
Live in Nashville  
(Margdon)**

The Don Ray Band rocks. The DVD, recorded live at the Rutledge in Nashville, is well shot, with excellent audio. I've said it before and I will say it again, Don Ray oozes talent. He is a great songwriter and a mighty fine singer. Of course no man is an island, and the Don Ray band are all smokin' players. Guitarist Donnie Lee Clark rips it up on his baby blue Tele. Jonathan Armstrong shines on keyboards; Curtis Jay keeps it in the pocket on bass, as does Scott Thompson on drums.

"When a Woman Becomes The Blues" is a great tune, and the original Rayettes make the band sound sort of Skynyrd-ish. Trez Gregory and Laura Vida can both wail.

"Victim of Passion" is a another stand out tune, and at one point Don brings former Little Feat singer Shaun Murphy to the stage to sing on "Love is Such a Lovely Place to Be." Those are some kickin' blues baby. Just great stuff. •