



[Artists](#) | [Issues](#) | [CD Reviews](#) | [Interviews](#) | [Concert Reviews](#) | [DVD/Video Reviews](#) | [Book Reviews](#) | [Who We Are](#) | [Staff](#) | [Home](#)

Graham Parker and the Rumour

Live at Rockpalast 1978 + 1980

Review by G. W. Hill

The comparison to Elvis Costello is quite obvious here. The thing is, Graham Parker pre-dated Costello. Based on the first disc (which is actually the more recent concert), I'd say the reason Costello got so popular is that he was better. Don't get me wrong, taken one song at a time that performance is strong, but taken as a whole, it's way too monolithic and kind of boring. In addition Parker has a tendency towards repeating the choruses to the point where they can become tedious. Now, all that said, the second performance is so much stronger. I can't imagine ever listening to the first disc again, but that second disc I'll be spinning in the future.



[Return](#)



Track by Track Review

Disc 1

Stupefaction

This is a nice slab of retro styled alternative rock.

No Holding Back

Here we have a harder rocking tune. This is a step up from the previous tune.

Jolie Jolie

More punky in some ways, this is not, however, punk rock. It's another good song.

Love Without Greed

While everything here begs comparisons to Elvis Costello, this tune really sounds like Mr. Costello.

Discovering Japan

Although there are no big changes here, this is still a high energy rocker that's quite cool.

Passion Is No Ordinary Word

Some of the melodic elements here rank up with the best on the disc.

Howlin' Wind

Here is one of the highlights of the set. There's sort of a soulful groove to this, and that makes it a bit of a change. There's a bit of reggae later, too.

Thunder and Rain

There's seems to be a bit more developed rock arrangement on this piece. For one thing, just the general texture fools more classic rock oriented and the guitar soaring over the whole thing really brings a freshness to the proceedings. That guitar really gets a nod as being one of the best aspects of the piece (and this is another highlight), but the piano should earn a mention, too.

Manoeuvres

Raw and punky, this is a change, but not really a standout.

Don't Get Excited

This might have been fun if you were there, but on a live album the whole "don't get excited" part is way too repetitive and this is a boring tune. It's a real snoozer.



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Beating of Another Heart

After the lameness that was "Don't Get Excited" something special was needed to regain interest. This track, a slow moving ballad with a lot of Elvis Costello in the mix does the job pretty well. It rocks out a bit more later, but never really rises beyond a power ballad approach. It stays pretty melodic.

Empty Lives

There's a bouncy reggae element to this, but the arrangement even has a little progressive rock in it, too. The guitar soloing on this is noteworthy.

Devil's Sidewalk

We get a bit more of a classic rock vibe to this number.

Endless Night

Although there are some good moments here, the whole sameness of the set is starting to weigh heavily here. In addition, this song is way too repetitive, making it really fall into the "boring" column. That said, there's some tasty instrumental work.

(Can't Get No) Protection

There's some reggae in the mix here and this is a rather interesting tune. There is a shift later in the tune to a more punky section. That's a nice touch and elevates the piece a bit. The repetitiveness really gets mind-numbing later on this tune, taking it from the interesting grouping to the boring set.

Nobody Hurts You

An energetic number, this is good, but suffers a bit from the monolithic nature of the whole set. It has a cool punk air to it, though. Again, the repetition is used beyond the point of being effective.

Don't Ask Me Questions

The introduction here is quite Police-like. This reggae-inspired number is a nice touch and a bit of variety. It's one of the stronger pieces here. The instrumental segment on this is among the best of the disc and features both some noteworthy keyboard work and blistering guitar soloing. That said, you can't ignore the bass, either.

Tripe Face Boogie

A healthy dose of rockabilly is added here to great effect. It succeeds in bringing some change to the table and that makes this a highlight. Of course, the slide guitar and honky tonk piano don't hurt, either.

Soul Shoes

Another highlight, this really feels a lot like 1970s Rolling Stones and it has some more smoking hot guitar work.

Disc 2

Heat Treatment

There's a horn section included here, and while the recording itself feels a little lifeless compared to the previous disc, this is a lot stronger performance than anything on that disc. There are some intriguing changes and we even get a harmonica solo. Even though this is stronger than the material on the first set, it does still suffer quite a bit from the nasty habit Parker has towards excessive repetition. At times I'm reminded a bit of Bruce Springsteen here.

White Honey

The retro keyboards bring a bit of gospel vibe to this while the horn sections bring it into the vein of R & B. Again, this is far superior to anything on the first CD. The melodic guitar solo is not only a great touch, but nicely extensive.

Soul On Ice

With this cut we're back into material more along the lines of the first set. It's actually quite a strong rocker taken by itself. After the monolithic first disc, though, this really feels pretty samey

energy, rock, funk, soul, blues, and more. It's not too slow, though, and really, it's pretty, simple, and suffers from that effect.

Back to Schooldays

Combining Chuck Berry with punk rock, this is a nice touch. It's another that stands above a lot of the material here and it really rocks. There's even a little (or one could say "a lot") rockabilly on the guitar solo. There is definitely a Rolling Stones vibe here, too.

Heat in Harlem

This slower rocker has a lot of class and charm. It's another highlight with some rock and roll blended with blues and soul. The bass guitar really drives this thing, but that doesn't mean the guitar plays a backseat because it gets some smoking hot soloing. The horn section is a nice touch here and this really is a great tune. There's an extended jam here, but it never gets boring or tired.

Fool's Gold

Here's another where the similarities to the first disc don't do it any favors. It's actually a cool, classic rock inspired song. If one listens to this disc of the set first, it's great. Once you make the journey through the sometimes tedious first CD, though, it just sort of feels too much like the bulk of that set.

Thunder and Rain

The guitar sound on this is classic. This is a high energy rocker that works really well. The label says this song is "Watch the Moon Come Down," but I'm thinking based on the chorus lyrics that it's actually "Thunder and Rain." And, since that's the vocal hook on the next piece, it seems that's the right title for that one. I will say, though, that at the end of this piece, Parker says the next one is "Stick to Me," which actually follows track eight. So, my guess is, they reversed the two songs when mastering the album, but didn't switch the titles. It's more than a little confusing, though.

Watch the Moon Come Down

While the label is still affected by the snafu mentioned in the previous track review, this is a slower moving number that's pretty classic, but also falls victim to feeling too much like the monolithic first disc of the set. That said, there's a great killer retro keyboard sound on this along with some tasty guitar work.

Stick to Me

Here's a classic styled rocker with a lot of R & B in the mix. This is another smoking hot tune.

I'm Gonna Tear Your Playhouse Down

Think this was one of Parker's hits because I remember this soulful number. It's a great tune and one of the highlights of the set. It ends with a killer bluesy rock outro.

Don't Ask Me Questions

There's some serious reggae on this tune and it's another highlight. The rendition on the other CD was quite strong, but this one's better.

Not If It Pleases Me

Blues and country meet on this cool tune. It's definitely a change from everything else here and a lot of fun. This really has quite a retro blues arrangement as the horns and guitar jam like crazy later.

The New York Shuffle

Feeling a lot like Chuck Berry done by the Stones, this is another great tune. It has a lot of energy and style and it works quite well. I particularly dig the guitar soloing on this.

Soul Shoes

This Stones like stomper was one of the best tunes on the first disc. I think this version is stronger than that one, but they are both quite tasty. The horn section adds quite a bit and the guitar just plain screams.

Hold Back the Night

There's a lot of old school jazz on this tasty rocker.



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