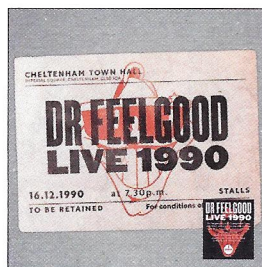


# DVD★Reviews



## Dr Feelgood Live 1990

★★★

Edsel EDLS0013 (DVD/CD)

### Brilleaux a go-go

With vocalist Lee Brilleaux the only remaining founding member, this Feelgoods show from Cheltenham Town Hall doesn't have quite the visual attractions of days gone by. Wilko Johnson's Norman Bates amphetamine stare and frenetic moves (like an interpretive dance version of Tourette's) were ancient history, as were his replacement Gypie Mayo's high-haired Ronnie-Wood-in-waiting shapes.

Thankfully, the man at the mic still draws the eye, all crumpled suit and sweat-covered menace. The latecomers surrounding him, however, have the air of jobbing sub-contractors, albeit ones who deliver the musical goods confidently and with minimum fuss. A brace of roaming cameramen are often unnecessarily distracting and intrusive.

Originally filmed for TV, the music in question ticks the requisite fan favourites boxes (Milk And Alcohol, Roxette, Back In The Night), although an over-reliance on generic bar band covers causes the last quarter of the set to sag. Brilleaux's wild man howl may be perfectly suited to Great Balls Of Fire or Bony Maronie (or "Moronie", as it's printed here), but few more from the doctors' own casebook would have been welcome. *Terry Staunton*

## Free To Rock: How Rock & Roll Brought Down The Wall

★★★

MVD Visual MVD 99400 (DVD)

### Out of whack in the USSR

Jimmy Carter, Billy Joel, Scorpions, Mikhail Gorbachev. No, we're not talking an unaired episode of *Wogan* here, these are some of the key interviewees of *Free To Rock*; a documentary which explores how rock'n'roll – once termed "the belch of Western culture" by Soviet authorities – contributed to

the fall of the Soviet Union.

Much of the story is told via talking heads, with historical context being filled in by Kiefer Sutherland, who pitches his voiceover somewhere between *Behind The Music* and *The World At War*.

A host of Soviet rock artists including Russian hero Stas Namin share their stories, and describe how the electric guitar became a symbol of freedom. Latvian Valery Saifudinov recounts fashioning a DIY take on the unobtainable Stratocaster using magnets stolen from phone boxes to make the pick-ups, and Yuriy Shishkov – now a master guitar builder for Fender, recalls making guitars in secret at a time when he lived above a KGB officer.

Westerners have their say, too. Mike Love describes how, in '69, as the first US band to play behind the Iron Curtain, The Beach Boys arrived in Czechoslovakia to find an intimidating assemblage of Russian tanks.

*Free To Rock* runs to just under an hour, attempting to cover around 50 years of history in as many minutes. Consequently, there are countless details which feel as if they deserve greater exploration. Nonetheless, the film does a grand job of piquing interest in an under-reported story.

So, next time you split your trousers dancing to Genesis, count yourself lucky you exist in a time and place that thinks that sort of thing is ok. To quote Macca, "You don't know how lucky you are." *Alun Hamnett*

## Richard Thompson Band

Live At Rockpalast

★★★★

MIG 90772 (2DVD+3CD)

### Rich pickings

Come all ye rolling Fairport fans, for the *Full House* line-up is gathered hence, save for brave Swarbrick the fiddler. The players here – Simon Nicol (cornflakes box guitar), Dave Pegg (bass) and Dave Mattacks (drums) – had also graced the two albums (*Shoot Out The Lights* and *Hand Of Kindness*) from which the setlist for both shows included in this comprehensive set (Hamburg December 1983 and Cannes from 1984) was drawn.

As a document of that configuration of players digging in to five tracks from



HR: showing off his imaginary piece of string

*SOTL* and everything bar *Devonside* from *HOK* on a relatively intimate stage, the Hamburg show is hard to beat. Mattacks and Pegg are respectively replaced by Gerry Conway (also Fairport) and Rory McFarlane for the Cannes performance, but the show still hits the mark, and both line-ups are enhanced by a pair of saxes and Alan Dunn's accordion.

Watching Thompson at close quarters, thanks to Rockpalast's switched-on camera team zooming in with revealing hand-on-fretboard angles, reinforces what a unique lead guitarist he is, and cherry-picked highlights from two pivotal albums, a brief interview, and CDs of both shows make *Live At Rockpalast* near essential. *Rich Davenport*

## Finding Joseph I: The HR From Bad Brains Documentary

★★★★

MVD Visual MVD 0576 D

### Ill communication

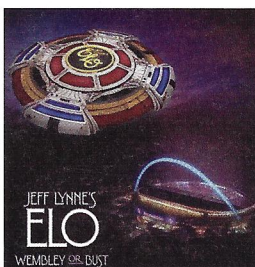
Paul 'HR' Hudson is known primarily as frontman with incendiary Washington DC hardcore pioneers Bad Brains, but as director James Lathos' insightful *Finding Joseph I* proves, he's no stranger to battling demons and has frequently sailed close to the edge of madness.

Born into a US military family, Hudson's early life was structured, if nomadic, and he nearly made the US Olympic swimming team as a DC teen. Stability, however, exited stage left after he discovered punk and Rastafarianism – with both

subsequently shaping the irregular course of his career. Indeed, while *Finding Joseph I* shows how landmark 80s Bad Brains LPs *Rock For Light* and *Quickness* won them influential fans including Duff McKagan and Fugazi's Ian MacKaye, it also reveals how HR's anti-corporate spiritual beliefs caused lucrative deals with Elektra and Madonna's Maverick imprint to go belly up.

Elsewhere, Lathos pursues Hudson's erratic solo career with his parallel reggae outfit Human Rights and draws upon additional insight (both lucid and surreal) from the film's subject, his fellow Bad Brains, and long-suffering manager Anthony Countey.

With the director deserving particular credit for refusing to gloss over the mental illness-related issues that have threatened HR's very existence, *Finding Joseph I* paints a comprehensive portrait of this eccentric, yet highly endearing punk icon. *Tim Peacock*



## Jeff Lynne's ELO Wembley Or Bust

★★★★

Sony cat no tbc (DVD+2CD)

### Mild North-West Hero

The famed ELO spacecraft

hovering over the lit-up arch of the equally famed London stadium makes a striking cover image, like an interplanetary explorer docking with the mother ship, but Wembley has rarely played host to such a down-to-earth superstar as Jeff Lynne. Decades living in Los Angeles haven't diluted his unassuming Brummie accent, nor the humble demeanour with which he addresses 50,000 devotees.

Elaborate production values aside, Lynne's reputation has always been solidly based on the music, a breathtaking catalogue of hit after hit after hit. With the exception of a solitary track from 2015's comeback album *Alone In The Universe* and the opening *Standin' In The Rain* from 1977's *Out Of The Blue*, the set features a remarkable 21 songs that saw active service in the UK Top 40.

Expertly recreating the bells, whistles, light and shade of the studio recordings in a venue still notorious for its erratic sound quality, Lynne's attention to detail is legendary, even if it ultimately means there's little wiggle room for improvisation, save for a blow-out on the closing *Roll Over Beethoven*.

The main man's brief between-song interaction with the crowd suggests that he still finds the attention a bit embarrassing, but there's absolutely no denying that this is a master craftsman at work. *Terry Staunton*