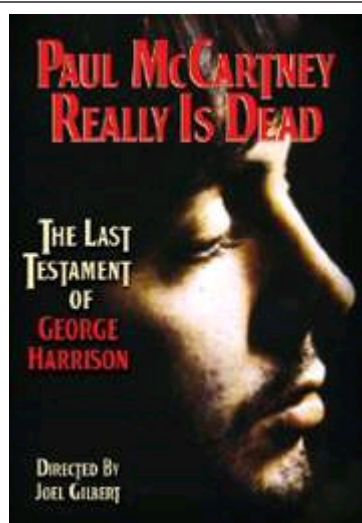


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DVD Reviews

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Paul McCartney Really is Dead

Highway 61
Entertainment 2010

by Joel Gilbert

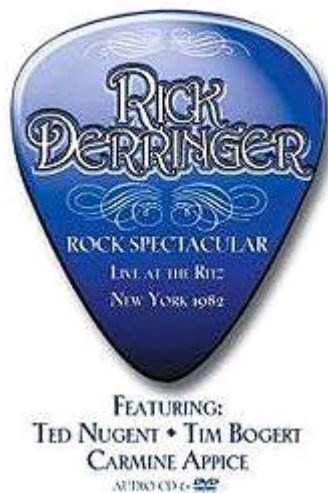
Subtitled "The Last Testament of George Harrison", the movie brings on the most compelling rehash of the most enduring rock myth.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, we've heard it all before - Macca blew his mind out in a car in November 1966 - but not from the Fabs themselves. This time, though, the story comes from none other than George Harrison who, attacked by the fan and reflecting on the fate of John Lennon, made a confession which, on a couple of cassettes, found its way to, of all places, the Highway 61 Entertainment's door. The company cleverly points out that the man whose voice is on these tapes only claims to be the Beatle yet, by offering the first archive interview where The Quiet One mentions the deadly threat of jelly beans, they show how uncannily similar that voice is to Harrison's in its tone and the Liverpudlian accent which, it has to be said, sounds a bit artificial in places. More important, still, is the story the man recounts: it's absolutely convincing!

The gist of it is simple: the band's guilt, the British government's fear of the innumerable fans' suicides and the MI5 shadow play made THE BEATLES conceal the horrible demise of their bass player and substitute him with one William Campbell but place the clues to the mystery on each of their records. And even write songs about it, for the accident scene only produced such characters as Rita, Walrus and Maxwell. That was the real reason behind their desire to stop touring and many subsequent deeds - all explained by George and appropriately illustrated by old footage,

sound snippets and the albums' artwork details. It's a captivating process, revealing every hint there is but stopping short of shaping "corps" as "corpse" after saying that "Apple" means "A Paul". It could make a believer out of any sceptic if only...

...if only there weren't glaring mistakes, although these are mostly obvious to the ardent aficionados only. If McCartney perished in 1966, the Fabs' first album without him wouldn't be "Rubber Soul" - or "Rubber Paul" as it was intended to be called - that had been released a year earlier, and saying their next LP was "Yesterday And Today" betrays the American mind behind the story. A great story anyway, a pretty entertaining, if grim, story in the vein of Edgar Allen Poe. Is the man really dead? But does it really matter! You don't have to believe in magic to enjoy "Harry Potter", and the "Paul Is Dead" is a great example of modern mythology which works as fine as any fiction, and you won't regret a single minute spent watching the DVD. More kudos to its creators for coming up with the Fabs-inspired soundtrack, hinting on their classics, that can be accessed on the very same disc.



An easy action with some heavy guests: quite a way to have a bash for all to join and enjoy.

Rick Derringer has had at least two careers in his lifetime - one as pop musician, with THE McCOYS, the other as a hard rocker in his right. The common denominator for both is the man's love for having fun. And that's exactly what he's doing on this video, previously out only on VHS and now following hot on the heels of its [audio track](#). Filmed at New York's "The Ritz" in 1982, the concert billed as "Rock Spectacular" sees Derringer share the stage with his friends who receive as equal a

**RICK DERRINGER -
Rock Spectacular****Store For Music 2010**

spotlight as the main performer. It's a hard task not to be upstaged by such guests the first of whom, Karla DeVito, comes on just a few minutes into the show to add some post-punky grit and an umbrella-adorned swagger to it with her "Is This The Cool World, Or What?". Still, Rick looks very comfortable in the accompanist role; more so, the Southside Johnny-delivered "Honey Hush" allows Derringer exercise his Chuck Berry licks and let rip, hair down.

Yet for all its drive the classic blues numbers fall behind Derringer's own masterpiece - sweaty and loose but tight even visually, with the band at their collective's best - "Rock 'n' Roll Hoochie Koo" which is challenged only when Ted Nugent brings forth his "Cat Scratch Fever" which, for once, lacks its usual menace. The merriment reigns here from the opener "Easy Action" that, the title coming alive, has Rick jump by the microphone, on to the very end, "Hang On Sloopy", sung by everybody to link it all back to where the journey started for the man. And then there's "Lady" where, in the company of the legendary rhythm-purveyors [Carmine Appice](#) and Tim Bogert, Derringer boldly takes the Jeff Beck's former place to fill those shoes with humble panache. That's what makes him so endearing and that's why the fun had at "The Ritz", the fiery "Party At The Hotel" an appropriate illustration, seeps through onto the DVD.

******1/2**



**RIVERSIDE -
Reality Dream**

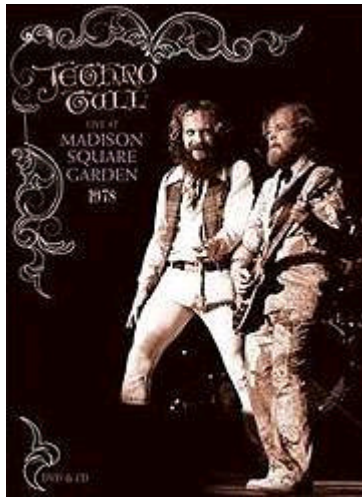
Riverside 2009

**The influential Polish prog-metallurgists
serve up their first ever visual document.**

The companion piece to the same-titled live album, this double DVD package excels exactly where it disappoints effectively proving that RIVERSIDE, while able to transport their studio-clear sound to the stage, fail to spice it up visually. Looking like your regular metal band - grim faces, bald heads, tattooed limbs, you name it - this quartet channel their energy drastically different: they're too static to impress. Yet, emerging somnambulist, as if in a reverie, the group come to share their closed-eyes dream with everyone there is to see. From "The Same River" on, it's a bliss-inducing spectacle which is laced on the screen with disturbing imagery and old film effects that highlight the music's deceptive tranquility.

There's enough glacial menace, though, and riffs in abundance, so it's quite refreshing when singer and bassist Mariusz Duda breaks the ice verbally to address the enthusiastic crowd before "Volte-Face" introduces some progressive rock 'n' roll to the mix. Still, for the most part the players stand aloof and emotionless, even when the music doesn't speak volumes as it does to everyone's delight in "Dance With The Shadow". But there's a lot of volume involved, especially when it all careens to heaviness with slightly industrial edge, whereas it's the sheer dynamism which makes "Reality Dream III" truly deep and keeps the audience mesmerized, all a testament to the understated heroics of guitarist Piotr Grudzinski. The final "The Curtain Falls" sees - an impressive sight! - the band one by one leaving the stage, but there's more: additional material provides a glance at RIVERSIDE from different years and in different venues. Not that there's more variety...

*****3/4**



**JETHRO TULL -
Live At Madison
Square Garden 1978**

Chrysalis 2009

[See the CD](#)

The unique occasion to see the Pied Piper and the rest of Merry Gentlemen in their prime.

Strange as it may seem, it's the first concert video of the classic era JETHRO TULL released officially. There have been bits and snippets, the Isle of Wight Festival performance from 1970, interspersed with paraphernalia footage and interviews, and the "Slipstream" film that ushered the band into another decade, but nothing actually live from the '70s when this ensemble blossomed - until now. Here, "live" has two meanings, one implying the show which makes the bulk of the DVD and whole of the CD in the package was broadcast from New York to the UK in a real time mode. It goes to explain why the visual disc begins and ends as audio-only and why the group walk out into the wings to be back up again.

So it's when the photo stills give way to a video that a real action begins. A multi-task frontman, [Ian Anderson](#) plays, save for his usual roles, a show host here, inviting the TV audience to follow him on-stage and enter the theater right in the thick of things for "Thick As Brick" laid down by a thick-bearded frontline of Anderson, guitarist [Martin Barre](#) and the old friend-cum-temporary bassist Tony Williams, plus, in the back, Barriemore Barlow who picks up the flute and takes the one-legged stand for "Songs From The Wood" to mirror Ian. The band's instrumental prowess aside, it's mesmerising to see the close-ups of the singer's face as his grimacing and other panto stunts are a spectacle in themselves, while in "Aqualung" it's the passes of Barre's hands that work magic on the solo. No less amazing is how the ensemble keep their well-hidden cool amidst the madness they create which might be the key to the TULL's uniqueness secret. More so, the immense maturity of the material coupled with the players' wisemen looks make it easy to forget everybody in the band is only around 30 years old here.

Unlike many of their progressive rock contemporaries, TULL didn't rely on lights, masks and other props opting for sometimes weird yet ultimately human touch and movement. Here, even keyboardist John Evan has a chance to do the clown dance while Anderson's busy with a rare organ solo - one of many captivating moments on the DVD. Bar a single tape glitch, the quality of the video is excellent, and there's hoping some more classic JETHRO TULL shows will be made available any day soon.



**SHADOWLAND -
Edge Of Night**

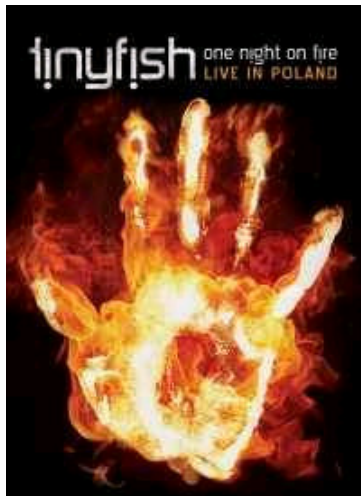
Metal Mind 2009

Self-proclaimed outcasts of progressive rock come close to the edge of thrill.

An acoustic guitar and a singer aren't what one expects from a British prog band but it's this simple immediacy - two figures in the spotlight shrouded by darkness - that grabs the attention from the very beginning. Then, the curtain rises, and the band's grander design springs into action carnivorously with "The Hunger", Clive Nolan spreading the wisdom not from behind the keyboards as usual but from center-stage, his long black leather coat like a metal guru's cape. He's seated back at the ivories, though, for "The Kruhulick Syndrome", the poignant baroque duet with the band main tinkler, Mike Varty, to which Mark Westwood adds some six-string lace before Karl Groom soars electrically above it all. With compositions high on hooks, everything feels a little bit formal, still...

...Which can't be said of the second, visually lo-fi but somewhat funnier, concert on this DVD, recorded in Holland a couple of days later when the leader soldiered on despite the sore throat. If sometimes Nolan looks not too comfortable in the frontman's role, all the man's multiple projects notwithstanding, his charisma wins over; more so, he's very

convincing when inhabiting a deep song such as the neoclassical "The Seventh Year", the most wonderfully realized piece on offer, or the recently written title track, and there's a real attack in "Hall Of Mirrors". The only gripe, then, might come from the sensation of the band lacking that same edge they're capable of.



**TINYFISH -
One Night On Fire**

Metal Mind 2009

**Nothing small but ambitions tamed:
piranhas they aren't.**

There's an immense pride about this English ensemble, based on friendship and self-financed, and it's quite visible from the audience, but the warmth they project from the stage doesn't make for a great showcase. Yet with too much introspection involved, especially on singer Simon Godfrey's part, the band's almost impenetrable cool feels mesmerising in "Build Your Enemy" where the smooth balladeering turns into the five-string bass-bobbing storm navigated by Paul Worwood. Later on, he ushers in the funky groove of "Eat The Flesh" that somehow makes the quartet a bit more agitated with Jim Sanders delivering a frenetic guitar solo.

Bizarrely, there's more energy in encores such as "All Hands Lost" than in everything preceding those last songs. Sure, combining the Noughties visual minimalism with the progressive rock's requisite pomp isn't an easy task, and having the costumed narrator, Rick Wakeman-like, on stage is a nice stroke, but the band are too serious. The use of sampler percussion alongside real drums creates a curious spectacle, though, and Leon Camfield looks like the only player who really enjoys the proceedings. Whether this enjoyment will be shared by the DVD viewers depends on how much a fan they are.

**2/3