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Music DVD Review: Johnny Winter - Live Through The '80's

By DAVID BOWLING
BLOGCRITICS.ORG

Johnny Winter has been cranking out his excellent brand of rock/blues for over forty years. From his Texas roots, to Woodstock, to dozens of commercially and critically successful albums, to a ranking of number 74 on Rolling Stone Magazine's list of The 100 Greatest Guitarists Of All Time, Johnny Winter has brought his energy and skill to the fusion of rock and blues.

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His latest release is a just under two hour DVD titled Live Through The '80's. It captures him live at seven different venues which span the decade. It all adds up to seventeen tracks that any blues or Johnny Winter fan will not want to pass up.

All the performances are performed as a basic trio. Jon Paris is the bass player throughout and Tom Compton is the drummer except for the first set where Bobby Torello is the percussionist.

The first four tracks were recorded April 6, 1983 at Massey Hall in Toronto. The highlight is a scintillating rendition of the old Sonny Boy Williamson classic, "Unseen Eye." It is far

superior to the later studio version. Also of note is the spend of his picking on "Sweet Papa John" and moving into rock mode for "It's All Over Now."

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We next move to a June 29, 1984 performance in Roskilde, Denmark for some of his better known cover songs. "Jumpin' Jack Flash," "Highway 61," and "Johnny B. Goode" are all performed in front of a crowd of 100,000.

November of 1984 found him at the Capital Theatre in Passaic, New Jersey. "When You've Got A Good Friend" presents his flawless precision well.

Nashua, New Hampshire, December 15, 1984, was the home for a rendition of the old Christmas favorite "Please Come Home For Christmas."

An interesting interlude presents the 1984 music video for "Don't Take Advantage Of Me" which received heavy play on MTV at the time. There is also an interview where he plays the electric guitar solo.

1987 found him in Sweden for a television appearance. "Sound The Bell" and one of his signature songs, "Mojo Boogie" are given a nice workout.

The final segment finds him performing at the Pistoia Blues Festival in Italy, July 1, 1988. The slow blues number "Early In The Morning" and a blistering version of "Serious As A Heart Attack" brings the DVD to a satisfying conclusion.

Live Through The '80's is a nice sample of Johnny Winter at his live best. If there is anything better than hearing Johnny Winter play the blues, it is seeing him play the blues.

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