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Review by [Rich Rosell](#) | posted June 11, 2011 | [E-mail the Author](#) | [Start a Discussion](#)

REVIEW

Back in the glory days of Squeeze - in the waning era of the so-called "new wave" - there were few things I looked forward to as much as a new set of music written by primary Squeeze-ers Glenn Tilbrook and Chris Difford. In music history you had your legendary Lennon/McCartney catalog (no argument there) as well as the Clash magic of Strummer/Jones - and naturally Elvis Costello stands on his own - yet for my money Difford/Tilbrook were always right in there, consistently banging out some of the most hook-laden pop tunes of the period. With the inevitable demise of Squeeze there has been Tilbrook's solo career - one that has fallen undeservedly below the radar - that has continued to prove that the guy knows how write smart, clever tunes that cram quite a bit into four minutes.

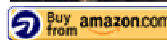
For this disc it is Tilbrook on guitar/vocals, fronting his latest side project The Fluffers, a snappy four-piece pop combo featuring Simon Hanson (drums), Stephen Lange (keyboards) and the ridiculously lovely Lucy Shaw (bass), recorded live at The Canal Room in New York City in 2010. The 01h:12m:23s set is a mixed bag of Squeeze tunes and solo Tilbrook, all imbued with the same sort of idyllic pop parries and thrusts. The 53-year-old Tilbrook, seemingly still top heavy in the boyish effervescence department has the ability make a potentially smutty song called *Hot Shaved Asian Teens* seem innocuously cute and bouncy. And that's a valued skillset, my friends. The band bounds through tunes like *By The Light Of The Cash Machine* (co-written with Ron Sexsmith), where Tilbrook's smart wordplay is abundantly evident.

I always have considered Tilbrook a master popsmith, and that my Rich-Rosell-imposed moniker isn't meant to cheapen or diminish what he does. There is an almost magical high art in assembling a deftly machined pop song, and Tilbrook is one of the more unsung hipsters in the game. It's for that reason I have to call out Mr. Tilbrook for the set's one weakness - that being his uncharacteristically unnecessary guitar solo during *Take Me I'm Yours*, presented with the sort of frothy ho-hum guitar chops that seem to be evolutionary generations away from the music he so neatly concocts. The moment is out of place, sort of jarring in its placement, and comes off as stage filler. And for a performer with such a rich catalog filler is something he doesn't need.

With that minor complaint out in the open clearly Tilbrook loves playing live, and he ends the show with his trademark up close and personal style. The performance is capped with a two song acoustic encore of Squeeze hits *Goodbye Girl* and *Black Coffee In Bed* performed in the middle of crowd, with the band perched atop the room's bar. *Goodbye Girl* is done as one of those giddy everybody-sing-alongs, followed by a shot of tequila for good measure. *Black Coffee In Bed* begins there as well, with Tilbrook supplying the vocal instructions, finishing off onstage in full-on electric mode. Fun stuff, and the kind easy, breezy pop confections that are deceptively complex and undeniably catchy.

Set List:

Annie Get Your Gun



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 Take Me I'm Yours
 Goodbye Girl
 Black Coffee In Bed

THE DVD

Video

In my experience concert DVDs tend to either look really good or really crappy, what with all the potential for problematic bloom from the often wonky stage lighting. This set from Tilbrook, presented in 1.78:1 anamorphic widescreen, leans well toward the "really good" side of things, and considering any flashy stage lighting is kept to a minimum the opportunity for issues is likewise minimized. This isn't a terribly bright transfer, but image quality is pretty solid throughout, with no measurable instances of compression issues to contend with.

Audio

There are two audio options, presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 and 2.0 stereo. Neither mix is quite perfect, as Tilbrook's voice has an odd echo to it in some spots, evident on both tracks. Equally off is the audience, which never quite fully went to the rear channels, and when it did it came off unnaturally when compared other concert DVDs. The performances, however, fare much better, and tend to lessen the audio issues with Tilbrook's speaking voice during the between song banter. Drums have a deep punch to them, keyboards are resonant and the overall mix has a generally fresh, live feel to it.

Extras

There's only one bonus feature on the disc, and it's a quickie entitled *The Making of Live in New York City* (05m:30s) that the backcover refers to as a "documentary". In it Tilbrook offers some insight while on the streets of New York prior to the show mixed in with footage of the band going through the sound check process.

Final Thoughts

Glenn Tilbrook: Live In New York City is a fun set of crafty pop gems from Tilbrook and his side project The Fluffers, with a 16 song set consisting of no less than 9 Squeeze songs. As much as I dug Squeeze I would have loved to have him gone a bit deeper into his solo stuff, but if he had then we possibly wouldn't have had the dumb fun of the *Goodbye Girl* encore.

Recommended.

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