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Movie/DVD Review

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Johnny Winter

Live at Rockpalast

By Timothy Stout

November 01, 2011



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The blues is such an interesting genre of music in that despite the simplicity of the chord structures and the constraints of its musical boundaries, it still has produced some of the more unique voices in music history. Perhaps it's because of the strict structure of blues music that forces musicians to find their own sound in an attempt to not sound like every other "vanilla" blues band that has come before.

Johnny Winter is without question one of the most unique bluesmen of the last 40 or so years. Aside from the fact that Winter obviously looks unique (how many other white albino bluesmen can you name), his sound—whether it's his growling singing style or his out-of-this-world guitar slinging—is instantly recognizable, and while he may share characteristics with others that came before him and some that have come since, he truly has a sound he can call his own.

This DVD showcases Winter in a power trio format that suits his sound and style perfectly, giving him plenty of room to stretch out and do what he does best. And though this classic performance from Germany's famous Rockpalast series in 1979 feels a bit dated in production quality, the simplicity of the DVD lends itself well to what really is a simple concert performance. Highlights include the opening instrumental, "Hideaway," the raging "Mississippi Blues" which clocks in at just under 19 minutes, and a killer bluesy rendition of the classic rock staple, "Suzie Q."

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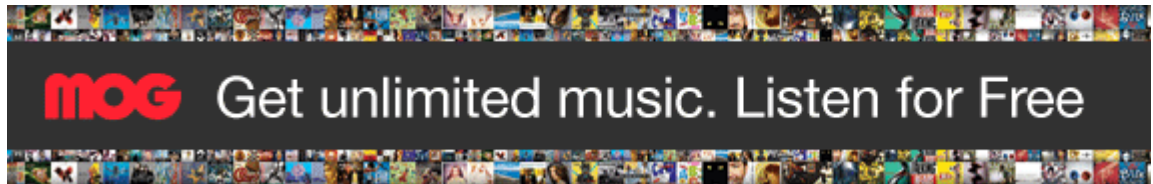
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