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Winter, Johnny: Live Rockpalast 1979

Well, here's a dude that needs no presentation, unless you have been living under a rock or not into the rock music scene at all. On the other hand, I must confess that, not having been a real fan of Mr. Winter, I never listened to a full album of his work. This was my real first in depth encounter with the white man!



This was a real surprise to get as a promo too; different from the usual prog /black metal discs, so it was a nice addition to my "work". As the title says, this is a re-issue of a gig done in Germany in 1979. For some reason, the disc does not cover the full set list, and I believe some of the best parts have been left off unfortunately. Indeed, the booklet mentions " the master goes deep into the Delta, unleashing a breathtaking 17- minute reading of Willie Brown's "Mississippi Blues", an undeniable highlight". There is also "Suzie Q" and a medley starting with Robert Johnson's "Stones in My Passway" that are missing, which is way too bad. Anyways, we still have the right to a cool series of seven blues injected electrifying compositions from the man and his legendary Gibson Firebird! *Live at Rockpalast 1979* has a definitive 70's sound, but the recording is more than excellent. You will hear clearly all the notes Johnny plays and be stunned by the musicianship he's displaying. Being the only guitar player on stage, he took care of rhythm, leads and soloing with flying colors. Actually, on a track called "I'm Ready" he plays bass while his bassist plays guitar. His playing literally fills the room with harmonies and down & dirty blues tonalities. Even when Johnny goes into the (frequent) long musical breaks with his solos, one doesn't feel something in the rhythmic section is missing. I was just wondering how it would have been if Johnny Winter and Jimi Hendrix did a gig or album together. I think there are no words to explain the result of this chemistry. Well, maybe this had happened and I'm not aware of it! I especially enjoyed the opening long lasting pleasure and instrumental track called "Hideaway" as well as the shorter numbers following such as: "Messin' With the Kid" and "Walking By Myself" (blues with harmonica is always a winning combination). A couple tracks are perhaps not as stunning as the rest though: "I'm Ready" is a more straight forward rock and his rendition of the Stones "Jumping Jack Flash" is not bad, nothing more. In the intro of the latter, he said something like: "for those who don't appreciate quality...", and I could have done without it.

So, in general, a real nice recording of a great bluesman. Too bad for the Mississippi music that is missing!

Track listing:

- 1- Hideaway
- 2- Messin' With the Kid

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- 3- Walking by Myself
- 4- Divin Duck
- 5- I'm Ready
- 6- Rockabilly Boogie
- 7- Jumpin' Jack Flash

Added: December 4th 2011

Reviewer: Denis Brunelle

Score: ★★★★★

Related Link: Artist Website

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