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Rolling Stones - Some Girls

Live At The Mar Y Sol Festival '72 40th Anniversary Reunion Concert 2010

Emerson, Lake & Palmer



Can you fairly judge two performances by the same band 38 years apart? Probably not, but that doesn't mean we can't try. For a band like Emerson, Lake and Palmer, who staked their reputation on live performances, it's too easy to deem the early years as their most vibrant. The sleight-of-hand chops and musicianship were only as fresh and energetic as the players, whose frantic chemistry was far too potent to last. And that gives the CD **Live At The Mar Y Sol Festival '72** a tremendous advantage over the DVD/ Blu-ray release of ELP's **40th Anniversary Reunion Concert**.

After a slew of random live box sets and latter-day one-offs, **Live At The Mar Y Sol Festival '72** is a blast of fresh air for ELP fanatics. OK, so it was previously available as part of the 2007 **From The Beginning** box set. But now it's been remastered and repackaged as a single disc. Catching the trio in mid-stride to super-stardom, this show was recorded in Puerto Rico on April 2, 1972 - three months before the release of **Trilogy**.

They open with one from the forthcoming album - an arrangement of Aaron Copland's "Hoedown" divvied up and conquered with pure aplomb. A stupendously pompous 20 minutes of "Tarkus" follows. Then we're off to Greg Lake's "Take A Pebble" buttered with a dollop of "Lucky Man" and Keith Emerson's "Piano Improvisations." A double whammy of "Pictures At An Exhibition" and "Rondo" (complete with a mind-numbing Carl Palmer drum solo) - and you too, may yearn for the days of glory when a little fire and brimstone turned a Hammond into a lethal weapon.

Leap forward to 2010 and ELP's unheralded, yet moderately successful reunion at the High Voltage Festival in England, filmed and kept on ice for the **40th Anniversary Reunion Concert** DVD and Blu-ray Disc. An older and wiser ELP take the stage and quickly get reacquainted with the material. "Karn Evil 9" sort of lumbers along, but "The Barbarian" and "Bitches Crystal" spring into action, and "Knife-Edge" is especially instigating. Lake's voice is surprisingly buoyant and exuberant, much more in line with how he sounded in the 70s as opposed to the 90s. Perhaps this is why "From The Beginning" comes across as elegantly as it did in 1972.

"Touch And Go" and "Take A Pebble," as essential as they may be, could have just as easily been left off the set list for anything a little less conventional. Emerson seizes the moment with an inspiring workout on the piano before easing into a segment of "Tarkus." A valid attempt at "Farewell To Arms" from 1992's **Black Moon** brings out the epic sheen before Palmer announces "Lucky Man" and we're suddenly adrift in a

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sing-along.

Once Emerson revs up his Moog, we are transported back to a similar double whammy of "Pictures At An Exhibition" and "Rondo" with a bit of "Fanfare For The Common Man" squeezed in between. The included *High Voltage* documentary adds a blast of luster to the reunion, with boisterous testimonials from band members and associates, all pleased with the results. Any ELP fan should be able to walk away knowing it was a worthwhile performance and likely one of the last - if not THE last - of its kind.

~ Shawn Perry



	
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