



Johnny Winter: Live from Japan

Directed by Kiyoshi Inasawa

MVD Visual

90 min., 2012

Johnnywinter.com

MVDvisual.com

I had the incredible fortune to be able to see this tour in Saskatoon last fall, when this same back-up band played nearly the exact set at Louie's, a club on the University of Saskatchewan campus on October 19, 2011 (reviewed [HERE](#)).

While it was a thrilling and amazing night, it was near the end of a very long tour for the troupe, and it was obvious they were tired (and rightfully so). What is nice about this DVD is that it was filmed at the Zepp Tokyo Music Hall on April 15 of the same year, early on in the circuit, in a country that had never seen him perform before. Needless to say, the energy level was higher, the voices were stronger, the music fresher, and all the better for the viewer of this release.

Johnny's beautiful headless Lazer guitar strikes fire as he sings the blues with a heart that has seen a lot of heartache, and a voice that matches the gravel of the road he's traveled. Whether covering his own songs, blues classics, or the occasional rocker -mostly at the end of the show, as he's wont to do and has done since the '70s - he seems at home in the rhythms.

The band backing him are certainly up to the task as they prove time and time again, keeping up with the master, who graciously not only co-occupies the stage, but shares it with his brethren, giving them ample opportunity to shine on their own many times. These aren't some youngsters but seasoned veterans who have traveled with other frontline blues musicians before.

Winter is bent and hobbled, walking in a wracked gait from the side of the stage to center - always shown in long shots or blocked by fans - where he sits for most of the set, and lets his fingers do the pacing. For the last two songs (which is the encore), he brings out his old and battered guitar and uses a slide to keep these blues tunes Delta-fied.

If you're a fan of versions of the blues, be it rock, Chicago, Texas, or Southern style, well, odds are you are probably on your way by now to get this, if you do not have it already. Winter is a fine example of the product of a lifetime of dedication to a spiritual sound.

The DVD comes with sumptuous booklet with many full color pix and excellent liner notes by Lance Perdue.

Band

Johnny Winter: Vocals/ lead guitar

Paul Nelson: Guitar

Scott Spray: Bass

Vito Liuzzi: Drums

Set List:

Intro

Hideaway (Freddie King)

She Likes to Boogie Real Low (Johnny Winter)

Good Morning Little Schoolgirl (Sonny Boy Williamson)

Got My Mojo Working (Preston Foster)

Johnny B. Goode (the true king of rock'n'roll, Chuck Berry)

BlackJack (Ray Charles)

Tore Down (Freddie King)

Lone Wolf (Johnny Winters)

Don't Take Advantage of Me (Lee Baker Jr.)

Bonie Maronie (Larry Williams)

It's All Over Now (Bobby and Shirley Womack)

Dust My Broom (Robert Johnson)

Highway 61 (Bob Dylan)