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[DVD Review: Making Tracks: On Tour 2010-2012, The Yardbirds \(MVD Visual\)](#)

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Guitar gods Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page each played with the Yardbirds for a couple of years – or less.

The band first called it a day in 1968, but rhythm guitarist Chris Dreja and drummer Jim McCarty were persuaded in 1992 to exhume the group name. Since then, they have been touring on and off, with hired guns filling in the gaps left by the superstar axemen, the long-gone bassist Paul Samwell-Smith and the late singer Keith Relf. (Health problems forced Dreja to sit out part of a tour last year, so his current status with the touring Yardbirds is not easily ascertainable.)

But decades of hard work can only take two founding members so far, it seems.

In the bonus documentary Glimpses, Dreja points out that he and McCarty have been playing with the current line-up three times as long – at the time of filming – as they spent in the first go-round, which lasted five years. Even so, to this day, you will virtually never read anything about the Yardbirds that doesn't focus on the legendary guitarists who came up through their ranks, the band itself having been more or less consigned to footnote status in the story of three giant careers.

Making Tracks attempts to correct that injustice by giving you a solid look at what the Yardbirds sound like today – and, in a nutshell, the answer is: pretty damn great. Fleshing out the sound with Dreja and McCarty are guitarist Ben King (a member since 2005), lead singer Andy Mitchell and bassist Dave Smale (both in the group since 2009). This is the version of the group I saw at the Ottawa Bluesfest in 2009 ([click here](#) to read the original review), and, heard loud and live, they were superb.

On one level, though, the Yardbirds are a glorified tribute band, with the group's defining sonic elements now played by musicians way younger than the two principals. In Glimpses, Smale points out that when the Yardbirds started, his mom was 5 years old!

Indeed, it seems odd to hear Mitchell introduce Shapes of Things. "We want to take you to 1966. This is a song that was recorded in Chess Studios in Chicago," he says, alluding to a moment that predates his birth.

And yet it all seems academic when you hear how hot the band is, playing the expected classics like Over Under Sideways Down, a rave-up version of For Your Love, Happenings Ten Years Time Ago, Heart Full of Soul and For Your Love with both impressive accuracy and in-the-moment abandon. And there are deep-catalogue treats for the obsessive fan as well, as the set list brings in the likes of I'm Not Talkin', Drinking Muddy Water, Think About It and The Nazz Are Blue.

Some recent songs, like the fine Mystery of Being and Crying Out for Love, are a delight to discover. Dazed and Confused is a stretch, though, as it is so closely associated with Led Zeppelin – even though Page did a prototype version with the Yardbirds.

King – who produced and directed the film with Bruce Macomber and McCarty – seems unintimidated by the ghosts of guitarists past. If his approach seems a little arena-rock at times, he nonetheless holds his own.

The two-disc package features 15 live performances, recorded at American dates between 2010 and 2012, and a second DVD that includes the documentary, extra material and four bonus tracks, including the first ever live performance of Tinker Tailor Soldier Sailor.

If there's a drawback to Making Tracks, it's a carelessness in the packaging and presentation. The cuts between songs are jerky, ripping you out of the moment, but each time the band starts cooking, it's easy to forgive the lapse in editing.

This one, in the end, is an eye-opener.

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Alec McElcheran · Musician at Alec Mcelcheran

The Yardbirds played a version of Dazed And Confused that included all the elements of the Led Zeppelin arrangement except the lyrics and the vocal style. You can find television performances by the band that show just how much the famous version owes to the work of The Yardbirds rhythm section, which featured Chris Dreja on bass during Jimmy Page's tenure with the band. I haven't heard the reunited Yardbird's version of the song, but I would be intrigued to hear if they stick to Keith Relf's vocal style and lyrics or copy Robert Plant's vocals.

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Just Alan · Works at Guitarist (magazine)

Yup, Just like [Alec McElcheran](#) said.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58mQvW0ROag>

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Lara Latini · Loro Piceno

best version of Dazed and Confused is does Led Zeppelin! they do better every version of every songs!

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