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Yardbirds: Making Tracks-On Tour 2010-2012 (DVD)

There's no doubt that The Yardbirds were one of the most important British bands of the 1960's blues & rock uprising, churning out a slew of legendary hits and albums, as well as featuring three of the most important guitar players in history, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, and Jimmy Page, all who went on to have glorious careers after leaving the band. Founding members Jim McCarty (drums) & Chris Dreja (guitar) are still keeping the fires going over 45 years later, along with Ben King (lead guitar), Andy Mitchell (vocals/harmonica/guitar), and Dave Smale (bass). The live footage included on this documentary comes from various live performances shot between 2010 and 2012 as the band were busy touring around the world. In late 2011 Dreja suffered a stroke and has been unable to perform since, so the band has been continuing on as a four-piece.

At first glance, you immediately notice just how young the new members are, and throughout the DVD it's apparent that Dreja & McCarty want the new blood out front and center. King is a spectacular guitar player, pumping out sizzling licks on his ash colored Fender Telecaster on such classics as "Heartful of Soul", "Train Kept A Rollin' ", "Shapes of Things", "Over Under Sideways Down", and "For Your Love". He shows his ability with the blues on "Drinking Muddy Water", and channels Page on their take on "Dazed And Confused". There are a few new tunes here as well, such as "Mystery of Being" and "Think About It", and these are solid, bluesy hard rock tunes that fit well into the Yardbirds songbook. Mitchell is another standout, a very fine singer who looks somewhat like former Jeff Beck Group/Humble Pie vocalist Bob Trench but carries an even bigger voice. In these two, Dreja & McCarty have found some potential new stars, and Smale anchors the bottom end with some thunderous bass grooves. As for the two cagey veterans, well, they've aged certainly, but can still bring it, though each seems to want to let their young lions take the spotlight.

The quality of the footage is quite good, shot with multiple cameras that capture all the action, and the sound is equally as strong. Over on the bonus disc, you get some interviews with the two founding members, a tour documentary, bonus live songs ("Tinker Tailor Soldier Sailor", "Smokestack Lightning", "Dream Within a Dream", and "Isadora"), and other assorted odds and ends. It's a great all around package, and proof that this long running British rock & blues institution is still relevant today.

Track Listing

1. I'm Not Talking
2. Drinking Muddy Water
3. Heartful of Soul
4. My Blind Life
5. Train Kept Rollin
6. Shapes of Things
7. Mystery of Being
8. The Nazz Are Blue
9. Think About It
10. Over Under Sideways Down
11. Crying Out for Love
12. For Your Love
13. Happenings Ten Years Ago
14. Dazed and Confused
15. I'm a Man