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## [The Yardbirds – Making Tracks: On Tour \(2012\)](#)

by [Nick DeRiso](#)

Always a fluid amalgam, even in their hey day, the Yardbirds have every right to continue forward — though former big-name members like Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page are, of course, long gone.

The question, though, is whether or not a group that still includes Jim McCarty and Chris Dreja, along with a new trio of contributors, can do justice to their classic moments while avoiding the pitfalls of ghost-band nostalgia. *Making Tracks: On Tour* makes the case, and definitively, that they can.

No, you won't find any of Beck's [now-familiar stylings on "Shapes of Things,"](#) nor Page's on "Drinking Muddy Water," nor any hint of Clapton on "For Your Love." Dig deeper, however, and there is much to be said for guitarist Ben King (a member since 2005), lead singer Andy Mitchell and bassist Dave Snafe (both on board since 2009).

**[SOMETHING ELSE! REWIND: [The 1967 release 'Little Games' marked the end of the initial incarnation of the Yardbirds, but Jimmy Page made sure they went out with a bang.](#)]**

Recording over five dates, between May 28 in Foxboro, Massachusetts and May 2, 2012 at New York City's Iridium, this reformulated edition catches a scorching blues-rock groove and holds onto it with a white-knuckle determination. "I'm Not Talking" bucks and snarls with a sizzling venom, while the pop hit "Heartful of Soul," also from 1965, is given a new edge. More recent tracks — like McCarty's "Crying out for Love" and Dreja's "My Blind Life," both from 2003's *Birdland* — are likewise enlivened by this

energetic lineup.

Mitchell, who provides a dusky, dangerous mystery on tracks like 1965's "Train Kept A Rollin'" and 1966's "Over Under Sideways Down," will briefly make you forget the late founding vocalist Keith Relf — so wholly unique are his interpretations. And King plays with a clean, no-nonsense style that honors the legends that came before him, even while adding his own notable flashes of inspiration.

Elsewhere, they pay tribute to the departed, with a fun run through Beck's 1966 original "The Nazza Are Blue," and even a suitably spooky version of Led Zeppelin's "Dazed and Confused." The Yardbirds then finish with a flourish, stomping through Bo Diddley's "I'm a Man" before a raucous crowd in Springfield, Massachusetts on September 1, 2011.

Nearly 50 years in, the Yardbirds sound much as they always have: There's just as much blues here as there is boom. That's really all you can ask for at this late date.

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The Yardbirds' 2-DVD 'Making Tracks: On Tour,' available on December 11, 2012 via MVD Entertainment Group, features 32-track audio recordings, and was filmed using six HD cameras. Disc 1 includes 15 songs, while Disc 2 features a tour documentary called "Glimpses," additional interviews with McCarty and Dreja, two more songs from the Yardbirds ("Tinker Tailor Soldier Sailor" and "Smokestack Lightning"), as well as two bonus cuts from the Jim McCarty Band.

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