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## Living Colour

### CBGB Omfug Masters: Live August 19 2005 the Bowery Collection

Review by Gary Hill

I remember when Living Colour came out they were kind of an oddity in that you didn't often see African Americans performing hard edged rock music that crossed into the metal genre. Many moons have passed since those days, and it's more common now, but still far from anything close to the norm. With those beginnings it's possible that some people saw them as a "gimmick band."

If you are among those who feel that way, it's your loss. I followed the band for several years, picking up their first few studio discs and these guys consistently rocked. I've never seen them live, but if this set is any indication, there show must be a screamer.

## Track by Track Review

### Type

Percussion leads the show off. Then the band scream in with this hard edged smoker. It's fast and furious and rather like Guns N Roses. Still, the mid-section of the number is mellow and more melodic. There are a couple of other intriguing segments, including a rather reggae-like motif. This is quite a cool track and a great way to start it off.

### Middle Man

The first minute plus of this is composed of percussion and odd sound effects and loops. They launch from there into another hard edged rocker that works quite well. This takes on a fusion-like texture later and there is some purely screaming guitar work.

### Funny Vibe

I've always really liked this song. It's definitely got a funk vibe to it and more of that fusion sound. Still, this is raw and extremely hard edged. It rocks out quite well. It moves through a number of changes and gets rather crazy here and there.

### In Your Name

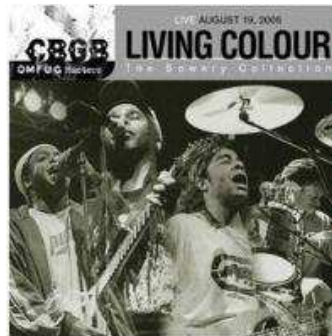
This is one of the strongest cuts here. It's also one of the hardest rocking and most brutal. It has some weirdness, but seriously stomps.

### Sacred Ground

Fast paced percussion leads this off and they bring it out into some sort of fusion sort of jam. This feels free form and quite cool. Vocals come in over the top after a time. It drops back to just percussion around the two and a half minute mark and then they launch into a trademark hard edged Living Colour rocker. It's a screamer and gets rather noisy here and there. At around the seven minute mark the drums take a solo and they move things out into space rock from there. Around the nine-minute mark it makes its way back to the song proper and it feels pretty punky at times. We get several alterations before they close this out. At over fourteen minutes (of course the last couple minutes are made up of the band talking about CBGB and its future) in length it's the longest piece in the performance. This is quite an intriguing track that's dynamic and at times rather weird. If the whole performance were based on this one sound I'd consider the band a progressive rock act.

### Open Letter To Landlord

Weird sounds lead this off. As this ends we get a powerhouse display of vocal talent and they launch into another of my favorite LC songs. Before they really kick into it they stop for another bit of talk about the impending destruction of CBGB, tied into the lyrics. There's a bit of a parental advisory on this track. We're almost four and a half minutes in before they come to the hard edged jam of the track. It's a smoking rendition and a highlight of the set.



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### Terrorism

They dedicate this to "that b\*\*\*ard George W. Bush. The cut reminds me of one of the stripped down, punk Hawkwind numbers. It's a cool piece that's an interesting change of pace. It's echoey and very space rock oriented. It works out into a more keyboard dominated jam that's still quite in a Hawkwind-like sound. When they drop it back to the more atmospheric jam that is still a definite sound cue. It dissolves to spacey chaos to end.

### Glamour Boys

With a bit of a 1950's doo wop overtone at times, this is a more typical Living Colour jam. It rocks out nicely and is quite catchy. There are some more parental advisors as they talk about how they forgot the words during this song.

### Ignorance Is Bliss

There are no molds broken here, but this rocker works quite well. It's one of the more metallic jams on show. Some of the guitar soloing on this one seriously scorches.

### Love Rears Its Ugly Head

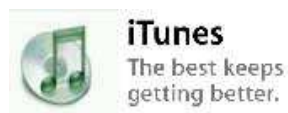
Another pretty standard Living Colour song, this is good, but not earthshattering.

### Times Up

This is a powerhouse. It seriously screams out and is one of the highlights of the show. Yes, it can be a bit strange and a little abrasive at times, but it also just plain blows away the competition. The fast paced spoken motif mid-song somehow reminds me of The Chambers Brothers' "Time." When they turn it out to an almost death metal grind of a screamed "time," that comparison is even more valid. That segment ends the piece.

### Cult of Personality

They saved their biggest hit for last. There was a reason this was a hit. It's just plain an awesome tune. If anything I'd say that this live performance is even stronger than the original. I can't think of a better way to end the show.



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