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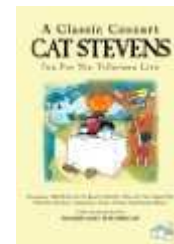
Publisher: [Eric Olsen](#)

REVIEW

Music DVD Review: *Cat Stevens - Tea For The Tillerman Live*

Written by [Lisa Solod Warren](#)

Published November 10, 2008



Somewhere in Nashville, Tennessee, some time in 1971, riding around in a car with friends during a break while attending a B'nai B'rith conference, we turned on the radio. I heard a song called "Wild World," and I fell instantly in love with a singing, songwriting pop star named Cat Stevens.

That love affair continued when I drove that same year, my fifteenth, an hour down the road to Knoxville, from my home town of Morristown, Tennessee, with a boy named Mike Crabtree (what on earth was my mother thinking?) to a Cat Stevens concert where he performed with a seventy-piece orchestra. It was one of those concerts that imprint indelibly on a young person's mind: I can still, when I close my eyes, see it like it was yesterday.

While I didn't plaster my bedroom with Cat Stevens posters, I did fall asleep with his record albums — his soulful good looks staring back at me (I was also convinced he wrote "Sad Lisa" just for me). And some time during the next couple of years I collected every one of his albums, including the first ones he had recorded in Great Britain before anyone knew he'd be huge. Those albums are very funky, let me tell you. They remain with me, in the crate with all my other old vinyl. (I have no idea what to do with any of them.) And I listened to Cat Stevens regularly through the late seventies, until his sudden conversion to Islam, his name change, and his end to recording what was arguably some of the best pop music ever.

The Salman Rushdie controversy in 1989 left a bad taste in my mouth, although Stevens, known since his conversion as [Yusuf Islam](#), insists he did not call for a fatwa against the author. It was only when I finally happened upon "Peace Train" re-recorded by Natalie Merchant and 10,000 Maniacs that I was able to revisit Cat Stevens and realize once again what a brilliant songwriter he was.

When I received *Cat Stevens - Tea For The Tillerman Live*, a DVD of a studio concert recording made in 1971 at KCET Studios in Los Angeles, I had to set it aside for a few weeks. It was just as well. Somehow viewing it in the post-election week made it more fitting, with the youth vote combining with old Baby Boomers to elect the country's first black president in a voter turnout not seen since 1960: it all seemed so retro. And so the concert's "stuck in time" element, absolutely jarring, with a young and gorgeous Cat Stevens, his hair jet black and flowing, sitting on a stool, strumming his guitar, didn't seem *quite* as out of place.

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Lisa Solod Warren is a writer of stories, essays, novels, and lots of other things. Her book [Desire: Women Write About Wanting](#) was published by [Seal Press](#) in 2007. She can be found at [lisasolodwarren.com](#), [RedRoom](#), and at [The Huffington Post](#).

Comments

#1 – November 10, 2008 @ 20:28PM – Mark Saleski [\[URL\]](#)

there's no doubt he was a great songwriter. the whole fatwa thing was just plain weird.

#2 – November 10, 2008 @ 21:17PM – Lisa Solod Warren

I can always count on you, Saleski.

#3 – November 11, 2008 @ 13:14PM – Mark Schannon [\[URL\]](#)

He was/is one of the greats from those good old days. Thanks for reminding me. I've still got some LPs of his I can listen to.

#4 – November 11, 2008 @ 13:20PM – Lisa Solod Warren

Me, too, IF i still had a turntable. Gotta get one at some point.

#5 – November 11, 2008 @ 13:22PM – Mark Saleski [\[URL\]](#)

good, solid turntables are not hard to come by these days.