



Welcome to

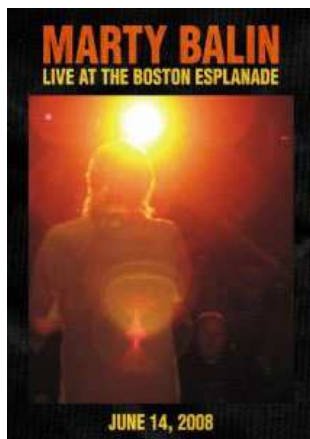
CRAZED FANBOY®

OP-ED ON OUTRÉ POP CULTURE

CURRENT EVENTS • CULT FILM & TELEVISION • BOOKS & MUSIC • THE PARANORMAL

[Home](#) | [Message Board](#) | [Schlockarama](#) | [Creature Feature](#) | [Paranormal](#) | [Multimedia](#) | [Email Us](#) | [Archives](#)


Marty Balin Live at the Boston Esplanade

POSTED BY NOLAN B. CANOVA, February 12, 2011 [Share](#)
**The Boston Esplanade Hatch Shell
June 14, 2008 (released 2009)**


It's a rare thing when one gets to meet someone regarded as having "living legend" status in the rock world. I did a little over twenty years ago, when a friend introduced me to Marty Balin. I remember thinking not *only* was Marty a founding member of Jefferson Airplane--but he *played Woodstock!* Living pop culture history. And he was a very cool guy with no pretensions.

Flash forward to the present. Marty, now in his late 60s, is still touring with his own band, playing many of Airplane's hits and still sounds great.

One of show's producers sent me a DVD of Marty playing at the Hatch Shell of the Boston Esplanade from 2008 and requested my two cents' worth. Glad to oblige.

A mix of mostly pre-1984 hits made for a lively show and, more importantly to the die-hard rock fans who came here to hear him, a familiar-sounding one. From the opening of rocker "3/5ths of a Mile in Ten Seconds," Marty is on solid ground with his band and the audience. Ballads "Runaway" and "Count on Me" evoke the classic Jefferson Starship (Airplane's later incarnation) era. The band is tight and Marty Balin is strutting with confidence.

For this fanboy, however, the pivotal moments came next with performances of mega-hits "Somebody To Love," "Miracles" (penned by Balin), "Hearts" (Marty's note-to-self: were there always this many high notes in this thing?) and "White Rabbit". This is great stuff, and Marty's Grace Slick look-alike-sound-alike, Didi Stewart, handles "Somebody" and "Rabbit" with much aplomb lending the songs further authenticity. I should also mention Marty's got himself a great guitar-player in Mark "Slick" Aguilar, who, at a glance, reminded me of John Kay from Steppenwolf. Quite the shredder. Drummer Donnie Baldwin is terrific as well and really holds the band together. I admit to doing a little head-banging to the TV and not being sorry.

But around here is where I also determined my only real gripe, if a minor one, with the production: while it looks like they spent a decent amount of money on it, the whole experience seems a little smaller than it should for someone of Balin's status. The concert takes place in what looks like late afternoon overcast. Nothing wrong with that except that the spotlights and colored effects lights only have a minimal effect. Had

this taken place at night, the effects would've been tripled. During "White Rabbit", I mean, c'mon, they *need* to have psychedelic swirling lava lamp-type lighting action going on there!

The audio recording of the band is OK, a little thin on my player, and the audience reaction sounds very distant, except towards the end. The only time you really get a good glance at said audience is during "Hearts" where the camera swings around and pans the crowd while Marty works them. OK, maybe I'm expecting too much and still living in Woodstock, but the middle-aged soccer moms mulling around the section dividers came perilously close to giving the show a "Where are they now? Playing at the fairgrounds this Sunday!" feel.

The classic "Volunteers" is the final number and the band puts their all into this finale. It's the most obviously politically-themed song from Airplane's seminal days and says as much today as it did forty years ago.

The DVD has some bonus tracks featuring several performance clips from other venues (including an acoustic version of "Somebody to Love" sung by Balin!) and interviews.

Touchingly, during the end "thank you" credits, among those listed is Marty's late wife Karen Deal Balin, someone I knew personally, but who died tragically and much too young last year.

For the Jefferson Airplane and rock aficionado out there, *Marty Balin Live at the Boston Esplanade* is worth the experience of getting your virtual front row seat to see one of rock 'n roll's veteran royalty still at work thrilling crowds and belting out rock songs when most men his age are content sitting at home retired and watching somebody else do it!

Columns Currently on PCR:

Chocolate
Hard-Drive Crash, Internet Oblivion, and Back Paul
Sendai Earthquake and Tsunami 2011
Collector's Corner: Movie Posters
Charlie Sheen, Winning at Losing
Battle: Los Angeles
Forgotten Films: Melody
The Big 3 TV Stations of Central New York
Cruising The Anime City
Rango
Seminar: The Power of Super-8 Filmmaking
(A)nother Day in the Life of an Astro-Zombie (Victim)
Has Streaming Video Come of Age?
Super #1 Robot
Hall Pass
The Tampa Bay Comic Con For February 2011
The Television Legacy of Irwin Allen - Part V: Land of the Giants
Otaku Encounter of the Osaka Kind
Radiohead-The King Of Limbs: Track by Track

Schlock/Grindhouse

10 MOST RECENT POSTINGS

Naked Massacre
Over the Edge
Maniac
Blood Mania
Tower of Evil
Piranha
Torso
The Hollywood Strangler Meets the Skid Row Slasher
The Notorious Daughter of Fanny Hill
The Erotic Adventures of Zoro
Trader Homee

3/23/2011

Marty Balin Live at the Boston Esplanad...

[Share this story on Facebook](#) [Subscribe to Crazy Fanboy](#) [message Marty](#) [Print](#)