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Case Number 16477: Small Claims Court



Slaves To The Rhythm: A Concert For The Prince's Trust

MVD Visual // 2005 // 138 Minutes // Not Rated
Reviewed by Judge Victor Valdivia // May 28th, 2009

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Judge Victor Valdivia is the owner of a lonely heart. Thank God it's not the one in his chest.

Note: This is a pre-release review. **Slaves To The Rhythm: A Concert For The Prince's Trust** will be available for purchase on June 16th, 2009



Scales of Justice

Judgment: 85

Perp Profile

Studio: [MVD Visual](#)

Video Formats:

- 1.78:1 Anamorphic

Audio Formats:

- Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround (English)
- Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo (English)

Subtitles:

- None

Running Time: 138 Minutes

Release Year: 2005

MPAA Rating: Not Rated

Genres:

- [Concerts and Musicals](#)
- [Performance](#)

Distinguishing Marks

- Featurettes
- Jukebox

Accomplices

- None

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The Charge

"He may be the most important producer Britain's produced over the last twenty-five years."—Yes bassist Chris Squire on Trevor Horn

The Case

That's not an exaggeration. Trevor Horn, for better or for worse, was arguably the most influential producer in British music of the '80s, and maybe of all popular music of the era. The list of artists he has worked with is remarkable: Seal, Yes, Pet Shop Boys, Art of Noise, Frankie Goes to Hollywood, ABC, Belle & Sebastian, tATu, Lisa Stansfield, even Tom Jones, amongst many others. Horn, after all, began his career as the singer and songwriter for the Buggles, who helped define new wave with their 1979 hit "Video Killed the Radio Star." After the success of the Buggles, Horn joined prog-rock titans Yes for their 1980 release *Drama*, an album that was poorly received at the time but has since become recognized as underrated. Ironically, it would be Yes, a band that was so unfashionable at the time, that would launch Horn's career as the hottest and hippest producer of the '80s. Horn produced Yes' next album, 1984's *90125*, and helped write that album's first single, "Owner of a Lonely Heart," which was a global blockbuster. After *90125*, Horn became the most sought-after



producer in England, working with the hottest stars, such as Pet Shop Boys and ABC, and helping create others, such as Seal and Frankie Goes to Hollywood. His style of pulsing, synth-heavy dance rock virtually defined '80s music, and if he sometimes had a tendency to favor style over substance, his best work still sounds just as irresistible as it did then.

In 2005, Horn assembled a roster of some of the artists he produced over his twenty-five-year career for a tribute concert that was also a benefit for the Prince's Trust Charity, a charity assembled by Britain's Prince Charles for education and employment opportunities for youth. The concert, which was filmed at Wembley Arena, included various artists performing their Horn-produced hits accompanied by a house band and an orchestra and is presented on this DVD. Here are the artists and the songs they performed:

Buggles:

- "Video Killed the Radio Star"
- "Living in the Plastic Age"

Dollar:

- "Give Me Back My Heart"

Grace Jones:

- "Slave to the Rhythm"

ABC:

- "Poison Arrow"
- "All of My Heart"
- "Look of Love"

Art of Noise:

- "Close to the Edit"

Propaganda:

- "Dr. Mabuse"

Yes:

- "Cinema"
- "Owner of a Lonely Heart"

Belle & Sebastian:

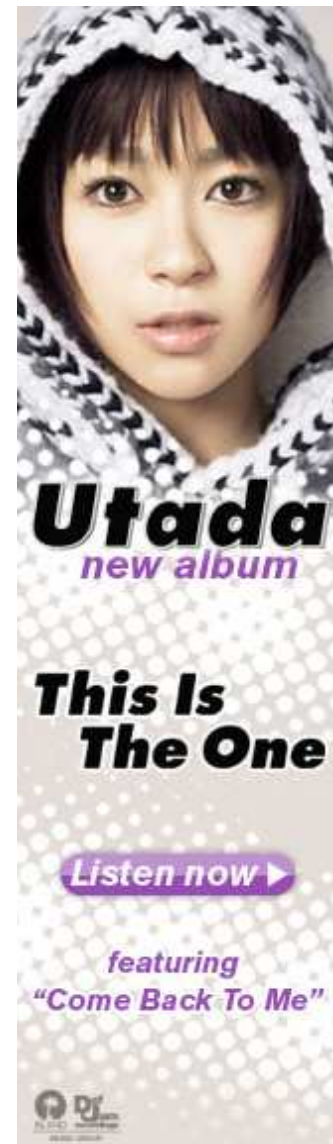
- "I'm a Cuckoo"
- "Step Into My Office"

Pet Shop Boys:

- "Left to My Own Devices"
- "It's Alright"

Lisa Stansfield:

- "Takes a Woman to Know"



tATu:

- "All the Things She Said"

Seal:

- "Killer"
- "Kiss From a Rose"
- "Crazy"

Frankie Goes to Hollywood:

- "Welcome to the Pleasuredome"
- "Two Tribes"
- "Relax"

It's not an accident that the best performances come from the artists that had already defined artistic visions when they worked with Horn. The Pet Shop Boys, for instance, worked with Horn on their third album *Introspective* (1988), and their already clearly defined sound was only enhanced by Horn's production. These are two of the best songs of their career, and the Boys do them justice with their performances. Similarly, though Seal was an unknown when he recorded his first album with Horn in 1991, he had already written most of the songs on that album. Their subsequent work together has always been more of a collaboration than a Svengali/puppet relationship. His performance here demonstrates his extraordinary talent and charisma, especially when he leaps out into the audience during "Killer." Yes give an especially unusual performance. Though Yes guitarist Steve Howe played with Horn on *Drama* and has played on several of Horn's subsequent productions, such as Frankie Goes to Hollywood, the line-up of Yes that recorded "Owner of a Lonely Heart" included his replacement, Trevor Rabin, who wrote the song originally. For this concert, both Rabin and Howe perform together, joined by Squire and drummer Alan White. Given that there has been much bad blood between them over the years, the fact that Howe and Rabin came together for this concert and gave a phenomenal performance shows just how esteemed Horn is amongst his peers. Throughout it all, Horn is a welcome presence who serves as not just as host but also sings and plays bass on several songs, accompanied by his frequent collaborator, keyboardist Anne Dudley.

The concert isn't flawless, however. There's a reason such acts as tATu, Propaganda, and Dollar are long-forgotten one-hit wonders. As their performances make clear, they are sorely lacking in any sort of charisma or presence. These were clearly studio creations that Horn used his talents on to camouflage their lack of artistry. It's also especially insulting that Frankie Goes to Hollywood closes the evening as the concert's headliners over far more deserving artists like Seal or Yes. While Frankie's bombastic pop is undeniably catchy, it's amongst the more vacuous productions Horn has ever done. Even worse, this is not a real Frankie reunion. Original singer Holly Johnson, who gave the original Frankie much of their bite, is absent and the band hired some unknown rock-star manqué to fill in instead. After only a few seconds, you'll be so irritated by his posing and hair-flipping that you'll be tempted to turn off the DVD and put on your old

vinyl copy of *Welcome to the Pleasuredome* instead. Still, even these flaws can't diminish what is, for the most part, an enjoyable concert.

MVD visual has done an impressive job presenting this concert on DVD. The 16:9 anamorphic transfer is beautiful, with little grain or artefacting. The Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround mix is nice and loud, although the bass does sound a bit distorted on a couple of songs. The extras are decent. The best is a "Documentary" (19:41) on how the concert was assembled and shot that has some great rehearsal footage and interviews. "Frankie Say Reform" (17:07) is a look at how the remaining members of Frankie conducted *American Idol*-style auditions to find Holly Johnson's replacement. Even if (or maybe especially if) you're a big Frankie fan, you'll still find it painful to watch. There's also a "Jukebox" option to program the concert's songs into any order you like.

Slaves to the Rhythm is simply too good to pass up. If you're a fan of any of the artists here, you'll need this DVD, because except for maybe Frankie Goes to Hollywood, it contains some of their best performances. Any aging '80s pop fans who want to reminisce about their halcyon days will find this a perfect reminder of some of their favorite hits. More than anything else, though, **Slaves to the Rhythm** is recommended as a welcome tribute to one of the most influential figures in modern music.

The Verdict

Not guilty.

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- [K's Choice - 10 1993-2003 Ten Years Of](#)

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