



Lauper with resonophonic uke.

Having Fun With The Blues

It seemed an unlikely stylistic turn, but *Memphis Blues*, Lauper's Grammy nominated, best selling blues album of 2010, debuted at #1 on *Billboard's* Top Blues Albums chart and stayed at the top for 14 weeks. Even less predictable, she took the act on the road, winning over fans who were probably expecting "Time After Time" and "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun."

Recorded in Memphis, the CD featured alumni from Isaac Hayes' and Al Green's bands, like Charles "Skip" Pitts on guitar and Leroy Hodges on bass. When touring began, most players elected to stay home, so Michael Toles took Pitts' place, career-long collaborator William Wittman replaced Hodges, etc. — although

harp man Charlie Mus-selwhite, who played on the album, became an irreplaceable component of Lauper's gigs.

The shows' format was that Lauper and the band would do a solid hour of blues, then encore with a generous helping of her hits, rearranged for and transformed by the band of blues and R&B vets. For her part, Lauper handled the blues material better live than on record, once she'd spent a few weeks on the road getting it under her feet.

The logical postscript was to film a show for DVD release, where else but Memphis. For the occasion, the estimable Allen Toussaint reprises his piano contributions from the CD, as does

Jonny Lang, who guests on "How Blue Can You Get" on guitar and vocal



Cyndi Lauper
To Memphis With Love
Megaforce

—excellent on the former, overwrought on the latter. On "Crossroads,"

his guitar is suitably lowdown, in contrast to his affected vocals.

Former Bar-Kay Toles has played sessions with Ann Peebles, O.V. Wright, Little Milton, both B.B. and Albert King, and both Rufus and Carla Thomas, among numerous others. He supplies exciting instrumental banter with Toussaint in "Early In The Morning" and then with Archie "Hubby" Turner's organ on "In The Dark" and plays superb rhythm throughout.

Who knew that Mus-selwhite's harmonica was the perfect complement to Lauper's voice? Not surprisingly, he solos masterfully on Little Walter's "Just Your Fool" and Bobby "Blue" Bland's "Don't Cry No More." But equally impressive are his solos in Lauper favorites "Change Of Heart" and "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun." Lauper turns in her best vocal performances on "Don't Cry" and "Lead Me On," another Bland number (no small order).

Lauper once said, "I absolutely refuse to reveal my age. What am I, a car?" Well, sorry Cyn; you're busted. She was 57 when this concert was filmed, something she should be extremely proud of. She looks ten-plus years younger and has more energy than most people half her age. And somehow between singing her ass off, leading the band, and dancing nearly nonstop for close to 90 minutes, she seems compelled (and able) to connect with every single audience member. Talk about getting your money's worth! This DVD/CD package would be a bargain at twice the price. — **Dan Forte**

While the concert is a great watch, Eagle Vision has also put some extras on the disc that really give a glimpse back in time. An October '78 "Saturday Night Live" appearance features Jagger in a skit and the band, with a very hoarse Jagger, ripping through three tunes. A segment from ABC's "20/20" showcases the band in a rehearsal setting, and a current Jagger interview gives some fascinating insights on what the band was feeling at the time.

The release of this DVD is a welcome addition to the fine job Eagle Vision has done with Stones material in the past year. — **JH**



Composing Outside The Beatles
Lennon and McCartney 1973-1980

Pride

Nothing gets Beatlemaniacs fired up quicker than a debate on the early solo albums by John Lennon and Paul McCartney. Here, critics and former band associates opine on the subject, among them, ex-Wings members Denny Laine and drummer Denny Seiwell, and Lennon mate Klaus Voormann.

This covers Wings and McCartney's dismal first albums, such as *Wildlife* and *Red Rose Speedway*. In contrast, Lennon exited the Beatles with powerhouse singles like "Instant Karma" and "Imagine," giving him the mantle of hit pop tunesmith — a role most expected for McCartney. The commentary from Laine and Seiwell is especially interesting, especially the latter, who recounts McCartney writing "Live and Let Die" in 10 minutes. While McCartney soared in the mid '70s, Lennon's solo career lost focus, including album misfires such as *Somewhere in New York City*, *Mind Games*, and *Rock & Roll* (though the song "Mind Games" remains a solo gem). Also discussed is Lennon's "lost weekend" in California, where he partied to excess and, unbeknownst to many, jammed with McCartney in a session that produced a sloppy, drunken version of "Stand By Me."

Another flashpoint is his last album, *Double Fantasy*, which the critics here argue over whether was it a final glimpse of genius or a flaccid bit of tripe. Your call.

For the most part, this DVD is compelling, but neither George Harrison nor Ringo Starr's solo albums are discussed, which all but knee-caps its critical validity. And, the critics tend to fawn over McCartney while painting Lennon — somewhat simplistically — as a troubled solo artist. But for the most part, *Composing Outside the Beatles* asks just enough questions to make it worthy. — **Pete Prown VG**

film, it's an intentionally symbolic moment, but further connects the viewer to this fretboard legend. No question, *Unstrung* is not your ordinary music documentary. — **Pete Prown**



Rolling Stones
Some Girls: Live In Texas '78
Eagle Vision

Shot in Fort Worth, Texas, at a time when the Stones were the focal point of the rock and roll world in many ways, this concert features a confident band fighting back at punk rock; songs like "Shattered," "Respectable," and "When The Whip Comes Down" show that genres influence.

The beauty of the Stones was they could mix R&B and Chuck Berry with that punk feel to create something new. The talk at the time was how the Stones were "going disco" with "Miss You." Well, not really. Deep

down, it's really just a blues song, as proven here.

The DVD includes 17 songs, some classics, but lots of new material for the time. The band delivers in every respect, including the outrageous aspect of Jagger's dress and actions on stage, Ronnie Wood and Keith Richard's incendiary guitar work (Chuck Berry should be proud), and Watts' and Wyman's rhythm section work. Watching the concert it's easy to forget the tabloid personality the band sometimes took on.