



MERLE HAGGARD In Concert 1983

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This is a fantastic recording of {Merle Haggard} live at the {Cheyenne Saloon and Opera House} which is located in the Church Street Station of Orlando, Florida. {Haggard}, of course, looks like his outlaw self playing an impressive set starting with a very nice {"Twinkle Twinkle Lucky Star"}. To clarify the use of the word "fantastic", it's not that the filming is top notch - it's actually a bit dark and grainy - but the overall performance has spirit and a soulful appeal, not the least of which is {Haggard}'s loose yet still commanding musicianship and presentation. It's a crowded and very busy stage playing to a packed house full of an appreciative audience. On {"Corrine Corrina"} he pulls out the fiddle and on a charming rendition of {"Faded Love"} his ex-wife, {Bonnie Owens}, duets. The (also) former Mrs. {Buck Owens} adds a nice element, beautiful harmonies on {"That's The Way Love Goes"} and a happy presence clapping her hands and lending some vocals to {"Okie From Muskogee"}. The horns and pedal steel guitar feel almost like orchestration behind Merle's twangy guitar, the Fender and Peavey amps creating a clear and precise edge that gives this hardcore country music a bit of a rock and roll feel. Years after it was recorded roots rockers and those fans picking up the {Byrds} and {Flying Burrito Brothers} catalogs will find this episode an inspiring work by a timeless entertainer. Comes with an interesting text biography on the DVD, an equally interesting discography, and the usual propaganda from {Quantum Leap}. An interview with the star or backing musicians, some credits (there are none!) and liner notes would've been a nice addition.

- Joe Viglione