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Sandy Denny – Under Review

Picture: C+ Sound: C+
Extras: D Main Program: A

Even if the British documentary series *Under Review* is good for nothing more than shining a much needed light upon the countless sadly underappreciated artists in the pantheon of pop music, then it still provides a woefully needed service. Once again **Under Review** takes up the challenge of thoughtfully and critically appraising an artist whose name you may be more familiar with than said artist's actual work. This time around Sandy Denny is given the overdue star treatment she so richly deserved.

There's an apocryphal story I had once heard that goes like this: A post-Yardbirds Jimmy Page is putting together a new combo, a band that'll take blues rock to the next inevitable level of heaviness and crazed rawking intensity. He knows exactly who should front the band, a singer with pipes that'd make any blues belter go jade with spiteful envy, but whose roots crawl deep down into the bone-ridden British loam; a faerie-eyed folketeer with long blonde tresses who commands the stage and owns audiences.

Of course we're talking about Sandy Denny here and not Robert Plant. All praise to the big honeydrinker, but listening to Sandy Denny, particularly her incredible work with Fairport Convention, I can't help kind of believing Led Zep was designed to be her band. The fact that Denny is the only artist to ever guest on a Zep record, that's her singing on *Battle of Evermore*, certainly lends a pinch of veracity to the tale. True or not it's certainly a pretty dream.

The usual British critics are once again on board and joined by Denny's former band mates to delineate her career. All agree she should have been a huge star. After all, Robert Plant was basically doing his best Sandy Denny impression and look how far his career went. Unfortunately, Sandy never really broke out. As an artist she preferred being a member of a band, rather than have the spotlight solely on her. Fairport Convention and Fotheringay were her preferred venues, but the record company pushed her to be a solo star.

Sandy recorded four solo albums, two of which, *Sandy and Like an Old-*



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Sandy Denny – Under Review

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Fashioned Waltz, are brilliant end to end. Sadly, she died in 1978. Once voted the #1 British female singer in the pop press Sandy Denny's work is now heard by far too few. With luck this doc will inspire more to give a listen to this truly great artist.

- Kristofer Collins

Kristofer Collins is an editor at The New Yinzer and owner of Desolation Row CDs in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. You can contact him at:

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