



Live: Town & Country Club, London

Level 42

[Wienerworld](#) - WNRD2569 (DVD)

Available from [MVD Entertainment Group](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange
by **Mark S. Tucker**
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I get more than my fair share of ribbing from buds and other crits for digging first Casiopeia and then Shakatak and then Level 42—even for my slobbering affinity for Little River Band (but, God, their debut is an absolute classic, and you can cull a lot of gems from later LPs, not to mention that heartstopping reunion DVD, *Birtles, Shorrock, & Goble: Full Circle*)—but this *Live* release goes a long way toward justifying what otherwise would seem to be a deadly bent towards yuppidom. In fact, oddly enough, it was years ago that a company-store clerk at Northrop Aircraft, a yuppie palace if ever there was one, turned me on to Level 42 while demonstrating some stereo equipment as I got stoked on a tube-driven Denon CD player.

Turn the critic dial a few notches backwards on The Alan Parsons Band, especially towards the Lenny Zakatek period, and ya kinda have Level 42, a fairly sophisticated dance-pop-funk-soul-jazz ensemble here re-constituted with at least one quite surprising guest: Jakko Jacszyk (Michael Lee Curran), a guitarist otherwise on very friendly terms with Robert Fripp and Dave Stewart as well as having sat as a member of the King Crimson tribute ensemble Twentieth Century Schizoid Band. However, we find that Jakko had gigged with Level 42 from '91-'94 after, of all people, Alan Holdsworth briefly colluded with the gents and then departed. Band politics, in a move reminiscent of The Moody Blues however, saw to it that Jakko never made it to the studio or became a full-fledged member nor saw his songs recorded. Funny how a band's own emotional insufficiencies can come back to bite 'em in the ass and put an embarrassing red in their cheeks, isn't it?

Level 42 (the name's derived from Doug Adams' hilarious *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* tome wherein the Answer to the Ultimate Question Of Life, The Universe, And Everything is simply '42') has always been a tightly dialed-in unit with sophisticated compositions based in chart-pleasing sonics taken to another plane so that the band enjoyed a hell of a lot of success in the 80s and 90s, reforming in 2006 and again in 2008. This particular gig is from 1992, near the end of a long initial run, and it sports, as always, the very distinctive bass work and not-so-distinctive vocals of front man Mark King. If I tell you the outcome is very like a Trevor Horn production, you'll have a good idea of the quality and timbre of the whole affair. Fans of Earth, Wind, and Fire as well have found much in Level 42, and I'm a big fan of EWF as well.

Live is precisely what you'd expect it to be: a solid polished set of hits and other tracks delivered before a sold-out audience eating it all up with fork and spoon. Took a while to emerge—21 friggin' years!—but that's how things go now as the music industry tries to find ways out of its own self-created mess, steps on its tiny little collective dick, fumbles, mumbles, and tumbles, eventually doing the right thing for the wrong reasons. Ya just hafta be patient.

Dammit.

Track List:

- Hot Water
- Her Big Day
- The Sun Goes Down
- Children Say
- The Spirit is Free
- Leaving Me Now
- Guaranteed
- Heaven In My Hands
- She Can't Help Herself
- If You Were Mine
- To Be With You Again
- Running In The Family
- Lessons In Love
- Something About You
- Mr. Pink
- The Chinese Way

No writing credits given—you know how DVDs are.

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