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## Dead End Drive-In: Now Showing - Big Country

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### Big Country - Live at The Town And Country Club (Wienerworld)

Following the recent release of Big Audio Dynamite II's live DVD and preceding similar releases from the likes of Barclay James Harvest and The Quireboys, Big Country are the subject of the newest live rock concert footage resurrected by the good folk at Wienerworld.

Continuing its work in making vintage television footage of live shows available on DVD, Wienerworld turns to seminal Scottish outfit Big Country, pulling the band's 1990 performance at London's Town And Country Club out of the archive, dusting it off, and releasing it as a time capsule of sorts, pure rock nostalgia wrapped up in a digital versatile disc.

It's easy to slip into formulaic rock 'n' roll tragedy mode and think, immediately, of the sad demise of the band's frontman Stuart Adamson who took his own life in a Honolulu hotel room in 2001 when thinking nowadays of Big Country; that in itself is something of a tragedy as the band were/are owners of an impressive body of work, a back catalogue littered with hit singles and lauded albums.

This live DVD finds the band playing to a rammed to capacity Town And Country Club, the crowd at times, most of the time actually, moving as one in time with the classic strains of the band formed in Dunfermline at the dawn of the 1980s by the former guitarist of The Skids.

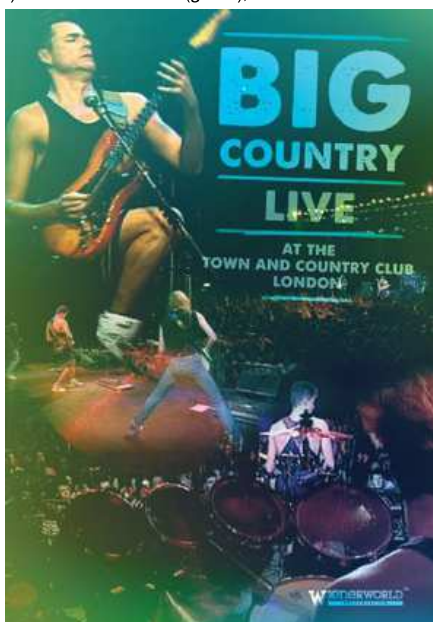
The disc itself is basic, another vanilla offering, but its taste enhanced by lashings of high-end songs, many of them hits in their own right. The Region-Free DVD features footage garnered from televised video tape that, given its age and the limitations of the quality of said format, satisfies in a way that only people schooled in this kind of late-night TV concert footage can truly appreciate.

Truth be told, my favourite Big Country memory from the '80s was the band's soundtrack work on cult 1985 comedy Restless Natives, so to find that the band open this live show with the song of the same name (the OST work actually taking over a dozen years to appear on an album of any sort) set the whole performance up nicely for me.

Adamson, curiously decked out in white basketball boots, belted shorts, and Nike muscle vest, bounds onto the stage and pretty much owns it, the band - made up at that point of fellow original members Tony Butler (bass) and Bruce Watson (guitar), with Pat Ahern on the drum stool - settling into a relaxed groove, as tight as ever yet naturally loose enough to appear completely at ease with the swell of adoration poured their way by the obsessive crowd members, Adamson a bundle of smiles and bad dancing, surely at his happiest when on stage.

Second song, 'Look Away', as you will know, is massive, its immediate follow-up on this disc another great, the band's first hit single, 'Fields Of Fire', finding Adamson, at its middle point, sitting on the monitor ad-libbing comedy guitar licks, before directing the crowd - impressively vocal and grooving for the duration of the live set - through a mighty singalong.

'Broken Heart (Thirteen Valleys)' slows the pace a little - another massive piece of crowd participation impressing - before Adamson slows it ever further by way of his first words to the crowd, five songs in: "This is where we get serious," he says as 'Come Back To Me' finds the frontman alone and acoustic with only a legion of sweaty males on friends' shoulders for company.

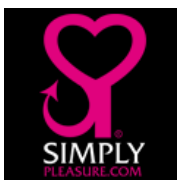


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- Big Guns - 'Down But Not Out' (Self Released)
- In The Guise Of Men - 'Ink' EP (Send The Wood Music)
- Dirt Box Disco/Bad Sam/The Blunders/Hacksaw - Aberrillery, The Dolls House - 11th October 2013
- H13: Jules Millis - Tigertaiz

#### Popular

- The Creepshow - 'Life After Death' (People Like You Records)
- dUg Pinnick - Uber Rock Interview Exclusive
- Testament - 'Dark Roots Of Thrash' (Nuclear Blast)
- Dregen - 'Dregen' (Universal / Spinefarm Records)
- The Stanfields - London, Highbury Garage - 23rd September 2013



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- Bowling For Soup - 'Sorry For Partyn' (A&G Records)
- The Quireboys - 'Halfpenny Dancer' (JCPL/Hecktick Records)
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Beatsteaks - 'Limbo Messiah' (Warner Music Germany)

'Wonderland' follows, another massive hit single for the band, the non-album track hitting number eight in the UK charts upon release in 1984, before 'In A Big Country' threatens to take the roof of the venue, the punters in the cheap seats surely worried that their mullets will be ravaged by the elements come 'roof-blown-off' time.

A fine 'River Of Hope' courses through the venue's PA and lubricates wanton ears before the set closes with a cool, and lengthy, cover of Neil Young's 'Rockin' in the Free World' which might seem like a standard now but was, in 1990, still pretty fresh in record collections and gig-goers' minds.

Nine songs, including a cover version, in around fifty minutes running time might not seem like the greatest VFM but, if like me, you are a soppy old romantic when it comes to pop culture, you'll find much to enjoy tucked into this simple release.

There is a shot during 'Look Away' when the camera is behind Stuart Adamson, looking out at the faces of his adoring fans, each and every one jumping in time to the music, mouthing every word; this, for me, is the best way to remember the late frontman. It's a throwaway piece of footage, considered basic camera technique by professionals no doubt, but in the context of how life would turn out for the singer/guitarist it is some of the most poignant footage of the band, and worthy in itself of you checking out this disc.



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