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Thursday, 24 March 2005

## *The Spencer Davis Group: Gimme Some Lovin' Live 1966*



Contributed by Brent Simon  
Wednesday, 23 March 2005



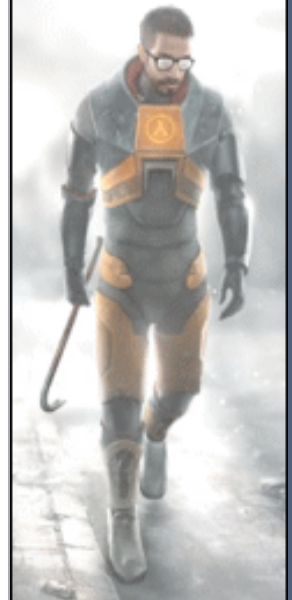
When one thinks of the famed "British Invasion," there's the Beatles and then there's everyone else, but the Spencer Davis Group were actually one of the first few bands to score top 10 hits on both sides of the Atlantic, and their music stacks up favorably and stands up better than many of their contemporaries, in no small part due to the fantastic and wide-ranging talent of their core membership. A live concert disc with supplementary behind-the-scenes home video-type

footage, *The Spencer Davis Group: Gimme Some Lovin' Live 1966* proves an appealing trip down memory lane for older fans as well as a valuable asset for those perhaps familiar with the group only through their headlined hit.

Formed in Birmingham in 1963, the band originally consisted of drummer Pete York, fraternal duo Steve and Muff Winwood and, of course, the Welsh-born Davis. Steve handled the vocals, and it was during this time that the Spencer Davis Group achieved most of its commercial success. When the brothers Winwood departed, however, the band kept on, adding Eddie Hardin and Phil Sawyer to the line-up. *Gimme Some Lovin' Live* straddles both eras, featuring a European gig from 1966 with the original lineup and other performance and rehearsal footage with Hardin and Sawyer.

The highlight of the disc is definitely the concert footage, where the funky genius of the guitar riff of "Gimme Some Lovin'" is reaffirmed in a superlative performance. "Dust My Blues," "Keep on Running" and "When I Come Home" are also given superb workouts, and the group's rendition of "Georgia on My Mind" proves surprisingly effective. In all, eight tunes are featured, along with a set-partitioning interview segment that awkwardly forecasts the group's split when a journalist asks Davis about their decision to have him sing vocals on upcoming tracks and whether or not he thinks Steve Winwood is in fact really "the face of the group."

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There is, however, also a roughly hour-long documentary, entitled *With Their New Face On*, that tracks the group through various stages of a 1967 tour, through preparations and press commitments to rehearsals and the like. Helmed by director Thomas Struck, it's obviously meant to be a slice of promotional largesse, but the chief problem here is that it's for German television. This means that while most of the questions and obviously all of the band members' talking is in English, there's a German voiceover that isn't subtitled, so you have no idea of the grander context in which material is placed side by side. This annoyance aside, the material itself is fairly interesting.

No doubt *Gimme Some Lovin' Live* isn't for everyone, but it should engage even novice viewers unfamiliar with the Spencer Davis Group as long as they're hearty music fans. The footage is all black & white, but evinces a surprisingly warm and intimate feeling. Davis in particular comes off as a mostly friendly chap; his pure love of music — as when he contorts to a tune on the radio, following the bending notes with his eyes — is kind of charming, something by all accounts largely lacking today. B (Movie) B (Disc)

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