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Live At The Renaissance Center (Country Music DVD Concert Series) – Lynn Anderson, Freddie Fender, Ray Price, Pam Tillis

Picture: C+/-C/-C/+ Sound: C+ (C for Price) Extras: B-/C-/C-/B-
Concerts: B-/B-/C+/-B-

Music Video Distributors has teamed up with Cleopatra Records to get into the Country Music genre and they are covering more traditional acts with the **Live At The Renaissance Center** series. Each DVD concert comes from a different time, with the Ray Price installment the oldest and shortest at 39 minutes. Each show is also shot in analog NTSC tape at 1.33 x 1 and has Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo in all cases by the price disc in 2.0 Mono. Two of the acts (Miss Anderson and Mr. Price) could be called one-hit Pop wonders, yet were much larger Country stars, but maybe cross-over stars would be the better description.

Lynn Anderson is the daughter of Country vocalist Liz Anderson who had a huge hit in 1970 with the quintessential 1970s record *I Never Promised You A Rose Garden*, a song that resonated throughout the decade and is one of its key iconic hits. She performs that and many more in a decent concert that includes *Even Cowgirls Get The Blues* and *How Can I Unlove You*, which she thought could have been a huge hit follow-up to *Rose Garden*, because of its wit, attitude and same writer. Her enthusiasm that this is her first DVD makes the performances more enjoyable. A great lady of Country, the talent and show(wo)manship through 15 songs. Extras include stills, weblink, Backstage Pass segment and two excellent interview segments taped before and after the show. Miss Anderson is exceptionally articulate and has some great stories to tell.

Freddy Fender is doing Latino, Country and Blues music in his own unique way and had a hot period at the old ABC/Dot Records label between 1975-76 including chart toppers *Before The Next Teardrop Falls*, *Wasted Days & Wasted Nights*, *Secret Love* (the old Doris Day hit) and *You'll Lose A Good Thing*, which are a quarter of the 16 tracks he performs with amazing energy, vim, vigor and strength that many other artists his age cannot muster. It is a fine concert and should have been longer. Extras include weblinks, stills, biography and on-camera interview.

Ray Price offers 12 songs and his one big Pop hit *For The Good Times* also from 1970 like Miss Anderson's hit. It was written by no less that Kris Kristofferson. He also covers Patsy Cline's *Crazy* and *Help Me Make It Through The Night*, a hit in 1971 and 1972 respectively for Sammi Smith and Gladys Knight & The Pips. Mr. Kristofferson also wrote it and was Miss Smith's only big Pop hit. The show is too short, but some of the only footage of Price on tape or film, giving it a special value. The color is not great on the tape, as was the problem with the **Ike & Tina Turner Live** set Eagle Vision issued recently. The preservation and faithful reproduction of analog videotape in the digital realm needs some research. Extras include a website and text biography and history text set to music.

Pam Tillis is royalty in Country and has not had a major Pop hit, but has had a major Country career and gives a fine, classy concert that manages to dodge the Country-as-1970s-Pop/Rock trend for the most part, though covers of *Last Train To Clarksville* and *Go Your Own Way*. It is the newest taping and has the best sound fidelity. Extras include "home movies" which are really behind the scenes tapes of the concert, stills, Backstage Pass

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segment, text biography, career highlights and on camera interview with Miss Tillis.

Overall, this is an interesting series with some real promise. It might be one of the best on Country to date and if it continues, it should be a memorable set of DVDs to come.

- Nicholas Sheffo

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