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DVD Video Reviews

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The Human League – Live at The Dome (2005)

A prodigious package of vocals and electronics, plus interviews with the performers



The Human League – Live at The Dome (2005)

Studio: Music Video Distributors (MVD)

Video: 1.78:1 Widescreen Enhanced

Audio: DD 5.1, DD 2.0

Extras: Interview (55 minutes); Photo Gallery (2 min); Access All Areas (19 min); Biography

Length: 160 minutes

Rating: ***1/2

This concert takes place at The Dome in Brighton, UK in December, and finishes off the band's tour in 2003. Their brand of synth-pop yielded many hits in the early 1980s including "Don't You Want Me" and "(Keep Feeling) Fascination." The original band was formed in 1977. Their first single was well-received in 1978 and helped to get a tie-in with Virgin Records. In 1981 there was a string of hits with "Love Action" to number three, "Open Your Heart" made it to number six, and "Don't You Want Me" hit number one on the UK charts. In the mid 80s they had a number one US hit with "Human." The band on this disc consists of Philip Oakey (lead vocals), Susan Anne Sulley (lead vocals), Joanne Catherall (backing vocals), David Beevers (programming), Neil Sutton (keyboards), Nic Burke (keyboards and guitar), and Errol Rollins (electronic drums and percussion).

The way the music is performed is very much like the studio albums and that will please many listeners who have come to know those songs extremely well. Given the style of the music there are only a handful of musicians and the music is entirely electronic with the exception of the vocals. The vocalists are occasionally out of tune, not loud enough, or slow/tired, but they still do an admirable job. The band has more than enough good material from the many years of making music to put together a solid concert that should evoke many fond memories of the 1980s—who hasn't sung along with "Don't You Want Me" at one point? The interview on the disc is quite thorough and covers many areas with

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the three main band members. For a look at the band in concert elsewhere, just check out the "Access All Areas" section—it has videos of the band throughout the country.

Sound quality on the disc is uneven. At times the midrange is hard and the sound is thin, etched, digital, and electronic (and not in a good way). It is very spatial however, with good use of the surrounds and very good vocal presence. As the concert continues the audio improves somewhat. The video is very well done. There are phasey blue lights all over in the early part of the concert and generally the stage is bathed in different colored lights. The arena is mid-sized and very nice looking. The editing consists of slow cuts from one camera that often fade into each other creating a dream-like quality early on in the show. Songs included: Medley: Hard Times/Love Action; Mirror Man; Louise; The Snake; Darkness; All I Ever Wanted; Open Your Heart; The Lebanon; One Man In My Heart; Human; The Things That Dreams Are Made Of; Love Me Madly?; (Keep Feeling) Fascination; Don't You Want Me; Empire State Human; (Together In) Electric Dreams; Sound of the Crowd.

-Brian Bloom

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