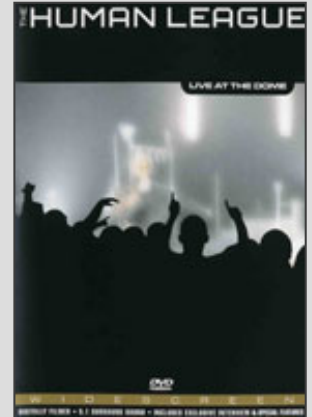


Human League - Live At The Dome (RO DVD)

Medley: Hard Times/Love Action
 Mirror Man
 Louise
 The Snake
 Heart Like A Wheel
 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
 Tell Me When
 Don't You Want Me
 Empire State Human
 (Together In) Electric Dreams
 Sound Of The Crowd

Interview
 Behind Scenes footage
 Gallery
 Biography



This concert DVD was filmed during the 2003 tour, where I had the privilege of meeting some new friends up in Glasgow and had a great time. This particular set was filmed on the last night of the tour at the splendid Brighton Dome, which incidently is where Scissor Sisters filmed their recent live DVD set.

The core of the Human League is still Phil Oakey, Joanne Catherall and Susan Anne Sulley. Joining them on-stage for the band part of the live line-up are David Beevers (programming), Neil Sutton (keyboards), Errol Rollins (electronic drums and percussion) and Nic Burke (keyboards and guitar). The live setup is quite impressive for those who haven't seen the League live yet (and I have three times in the last 4 years), white instrumentation on an all-white set down to the mic stands, with a cool set of electronic drums on a large rectangular frame.

As a quick aside, Nic Burke stands out from the rest of the band slightly with an almost Goth-inspired image. It must also be perceived as an androgynous image too, as there was some debate between my group as to whether Nic was in fact male or female. It was more between myself and the rest of the group actually. Sorry Nic, I stuck up for you...

The concert is a cracking set and incorporates just about all of their big singles, including what is officially at least an Oakey/Moroder solo single. (Together In) Electric Dreams has kind of morphed into the Human League back catalogue though, appearing on all the greatest hits compilations to date. Musically the group can do no wrong live, they have developed into an incredibly tight live band after the last few years of quite extensive touring.

Where they do have a weakness is in the vocals. The main trio have all acknowledged that they don't really consider themselves as good singers, and watching a live performance rather than being caught up in the live experience does make their vocal limitations more obvious. Oakey's vocal chords start to feel the strain towards the back end of the concert, explained in the interview as due to working too much by also rehearsing for a tour of Australia and the US at the same time. To be fair to him though, he doesn't let up and any League fans know about and forgive their limitations anyway. The vocal issues, in truth, are not issues unless you prefer to be listening to pitch perfect performers, so go off and listen to your Mariah Carey, Whitney Houston or Celine Dion if that's more your bag.

You have a choice between Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround or plain 2.0 Stereo soundtracks, my preference was to have the music blaring out from speakers around the room; the whole shaking to the bleeps of synthpop in it's purest form. Speaking of which, I think Open Your Heart (possibly the best League track ever) is the only track I know where the audience actually sings the bleeps – and, yes, I did too...

Gathering tracks from across the decades, you get a nice mix of perfect League songs and a live performance to put some trendier bands (now at least) to shame. The on-stage banter is not that fantastic, but then I don't know many bands who bother with that so much. I did, however, learn that The Snake was about driving between Manchester and Sheffield and suddenly the lyrics just made so much more sense! Oakey gives a nod to support man John Foxx, acknowledging his first solo album Metamatic and name-checking the latest Crash & Burn. Foxx doesn't appear on this DVD anywhere, but he was a superb support act as well as a good headliner in his own right in this year.

The interview lasts for about an hour. 35 minutes is spent with Phil, Susan and Joanne and is quite a candid

interview with Susan actually getting the most say, quite surprisingly. Then you get around 20 minutes of Phil by himself talking mainly about the pre-Dare days. Very interesting stuff, and none of them afraid to correct the interviewer frequently when he gets his facts slightly wrong.

There is also some behind the scenes footage from the previously mentioned US tour. A couple of performances are included such as the Mardi Gras and a priceless rehearsal of Hard Times in a dressing room with Nic and Neil playing air instruments (just like me when I'm listening, actually). Nic is obviously used to it, but Neil cracks up a few times playing his air synth.

The gallery is a selection of League on tour photos that play automatically and set to music, but they are really more of the holiday variety rather than stills of the band in action. This gives a slightly more inclusive feel to this extra, friendly rather than the aloof professional shots you'd normally get.

Finally, there is a text biography for those who don't yet know it.

Overall an excellent package, well worth getting if you're a League fan. Worth a shot if you're curious about the origins of synthpop and want to see a decent live performance.

Added: Thursday, April 07, 2005

Reviewer: [Si Wooldridge](#)

Score: ★★★★★

hits: 108

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