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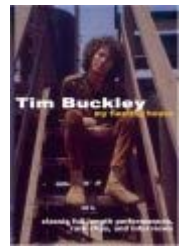
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REVIEW

Music DVD Review: Tim Buckley - *My Fleeting House*

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It's not often that I get to show my ignorance in public to quite the extent that I'm about to now, but I figure I'd better come clean right from the start with this one. When I requested a copy of the new music DVD *Tim Buckley: My Fleeting House* I don't know who I thought Tim Buckley was, but it turns out I had never heard of him before.

To be fair to me, he did die in 1975 when I was only fourteen, and he had very little popular exposure over the course of his nine-year career, so it's not too surprising that I wouldn't know who the heck he was. However, in some ways my ignorance probably makes me a good choice to review this package.

Tim Buckley: My Fleeting House is part documentary and part concert disc with the fourteen songs each being introduced and placed in context by his biographer David Browne, former lead guitar player and friend Lee Underwood, and Larry Beckett who co-wrote a number of Buckley's earlier music. The performances are not from one concert; rather they have been culled from various television (and one movie) appearances that Tim made in the course of his career. The DVD gives you the option of watching the video clips of Tim performing without any of the talking head bits, so you can watch them as if they were a concert.

So who was [Tim Buckley](#) and what makes him so special that they went and made a documentary about him and have gone to a lot of trouble to resurrect some old video? At first glance he doesn't appear that much different than any of the other 1960's tragic figures who lost the battle with drugs and booze. (In Tim's case it was a mix of heroin and booze one night after having been clean for a while - the heroin must have been too much for his system.)



Before I watched the DVD and listened to his music, I started reading about him. I was expecting something along the lines of Graham Parsons: high, lonesome, psychedelic country rock ala the Birds or The Flying Burrito Brothers. For those of you who know what Tim's work sounded like, you're probably quietly laughing up your sleeve right about now.

Tim's music ran the gamut from folk and free form jazz to rhythm and blues influenced rock and roll. He was an experimenter and improviser who really didn't seem like he cared whether anybody listened to his music or not. Nothing he did sounded remotely like anything that was on the radio or what anyone else was trying to do.

The closest comparisons I can think of are some of the jazz-fusion groups of the time. While they were doing jazz funk mixes, he was doing jazz-folk, afro-Cuban, jazz-rock, and a mixture of all three. It wasn't until just before his death that his band even looked remotely conventional with bass, two guitars, drum kit, and keyboards. Until then it had been everything from a trio made up of two guitars and congas to a quintet made up of drums, trumpet, bass, and two guitars.

When he tried to be conventional and attempted to produce moneymaking music as he was trying in the last couple of songs on the DVD ("Sally Go Round The Roses" and "The Dolphins"), his voice was almost too distinct to be "normal." He had a great voice for climbing all over the scales. It could make a sudden leap from the bass cleft to almost falsetto without skipping a beat.

It is not an easy voice to listen to even at it's most conventional because it had developed in tandem with music

that it was suited to. The improvisational jazz music he had been playing required a voice to work like another instrument in the band, not as the lead in the sense we are used to. Even for our ears, used to far more experimental music than they were more than thirty years ago, it takes some getting used to.

What's great about the DVD *Tim Buckley: My Fleeting House* is that even the uninitiated like me get a complete picture of the man's music. Having each song introduced and placed into context in terms of where Tim was in his career and what he was trying to do at the time help to complete the portrait. There's not much in the way of biographical detail on the disc. I learned about him from reading his web site. The twelve-page booklet included with the disc only talks about the music and the performance locales, not the man. Since the point is to introduce people to Tim Buckley's music, that's not that important.



Tim Buckley was a multifaceted performer whose creative energy wouldn't allow him to settle in one place stylistically for long. *Tim Buckley: My Fleeting House* does a remarkable job of depicting that through each piece of video it has resurrected. While you can listen to it 5.1 surround sound stereo, some of the sound quality of the video is of dubious quality so it doesn't make much of a difference.

Fans of Tim Buckley will appreciate the opportunity to see some of this lost footage so as to have a record of him performing. For those of us not familiar with his work prior to seeing this disc, it acts as a great introduction. Either way *Tim Buckley: My Fleeting House* is a very good portrait of singer/songwriter Tim Buckley's musical career and the different styles it encompassed.



Richard Marcus is a long-haired Canadian iconoclast who writes reviews and opines on the world as he sees it at [Leap In The Dark](#) and [Desicritics](#).