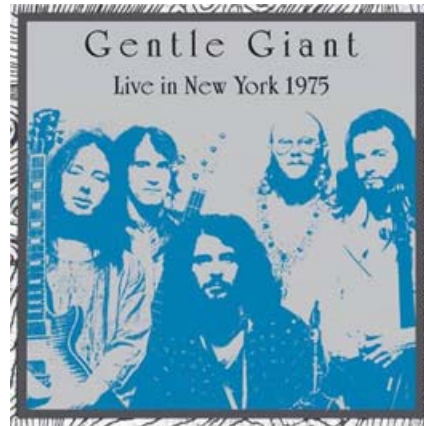




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### Gentle Giant – Live in New York 1975



By Gary Hill

#### Overall Review

This live album from Gentle Giant has been reissued into the modern era. As one might expect from a live disc from that time period, the recording isn't quite up to modern standards. That said, it still sounds generally good. It also caught an inspired performance from this killer progressive rock outfit. It's recommended to all fans of the group and fans of prog in general.

#### Track by Track Review

**Cogs in Cogs:** A droning keyboard sound leads things off. Then we get a little weirdness that leads to silence. From here they rise up in angular, jumpy sort of jam that's part King Crimson, part RIO and part Kraftwerk. Stabs of sound wander here and there. This is weird, but also cool. It moves out into a more melodic movement after a time, but then these two motifs are merged into one. This then shifts out into a killer fast paced prog journey that's very cool. It drops back for more weirdness, then screams out in a more guitar driven journey that still shares a lot of musical ground with what came before. Vocals don't come in until about three and a half minutes, nearly screamed over the top. They shift this out later into another killer jam that has a lot in common with early Yes.

**Funny Ways:** Starting a bit like the more balladic of old King Crimson tempered with *Wish You Were Here* era dark balladic Pink Floyd, this shifts out a bit later with some more symphonic instrumentation. They run through in this format for the first vocals, but then shift out a bit in a new motif as they carry on. They return to the killer balladic functions, though, adding emotion and power to the treatment when they do. It works out into an arrangement that feels a bit like Chicago goes prog rock to me. This holds it a while until they shift out towards something more

akin to an ELP jam. It drops way down from there to a chimey little sound (vibes?) and they start to rise back up from that point. Eventually this gives way to a reprise of balladic stylings, but the sound gets a little convoluted here. After time this feels like Lionel Hampton playing on “Welcome to the Machine.” After a crescendo they turn to the more pure rendition of that ballad structure section. That movement takes it to its conclusion.

**The Runaway / Experience:** The sound of glass breaking (this comes from *In A Glass House*) opens this and eventually becomes a pounding sort of rhythmic motif that holds the cut for a time. They scream out from there in fast paced prog fury that’s quite cool. It modulates out into ELP-like territory for a time, but they also cover some ground that seems more like early Yes. In fact, that probably dominates more than the ELP-leanings – at least through this part of the piece. They take it out into something more akin to Traffic for a while, but then crescendo to a false ending. This rises back up with more Emerson Lake and Palmer like stuff. They shift out from there, after a time, into a reworking of the track’s central theme. This eventually gives way to a bounding sort of instrumental progression. The bass takes over and is joined after a time by some Renaissance (the era, not the band) inspired sounds. They alternate between more complete band arrangement and bass soloing until exploding out into another hard rocking jam that’s quite strong. This is seemingly merged with the segment that came before and then gives way to an extremely tasty guitar solo during the instrumental excursion. We get a short Zappa-like segment that fades down to end it.

**So Sincere:** This starts with a classical music meets jazz feel. It is a bit dissonant at times. The vocals come in with a lilting, careening feel over the top of this strange motif. The overall effect is a bit alienating. After a while, percussion joins and it seems like they might be ready to move into another direction. Instead, it remains as accompaniment to another round of that movement. After this, though, they crescendo and scream out into a killer fast paced, slightly off-kilter guitar driven jam. Then it drops back to just percussion for another round of vocals. They are delivered in the same fashion, but with different backing and additional voices added to the mix. This gives way to another killer prog jam based on the same themes as before. We get some awesome soloing in this section. It’s an extremely stirring movement. We get a drum solo at around the six minute mark. I’m not a big fan of drum solos, so that’s kind of a case of a minute and a half wasted in my book. It does give way, though, to a cool chime section. This is still percussion, essentially, but it also has melody and is a nice touch. After almost two minutes like this (it gets quite intense) we move back out into more drum solo. This carries it through to the conclusion of the track, ending with a little percussive quote of Iron Butterfly’s classic “In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida.” At eleven and a half minutes (the last minute or so is just the crowd), this epic is the longest track on the CD.

**Free Hand:** A swirling, Yes-like segment starts this, transitioning out into more King Crimson-like territory at times. This gives way to a killer, bouncing, almost funky jam. They move off into other instrumental sections and such but keep returning to the central song structure. We get a killer funky jam at about mid-point. This gives way to some smoking guitar work. This is my favorite cut on the disc. It’s a real rocker, accessible yet still challenging. They drop it out to a killer movement late to serve as the closer. It has more of a classic rock feel to it.

**Just the Same:** The group’s encore, the keyboard texture that opens this feels a bit like Supertramp. They move out to more typical Gentle Giant territory from there, though, taking it through an angular jam. A number of changes and shifts are pulled in here and there. They work it into a melodic fusion-like section later for great effect. This eventually takes it through a series of alterations. At times they become more King Crimson-like at other points they turn towards a more straightforward blues rock. This is another strong cut and serves as a strong closer.



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