



Various Artists

Dutch Woodstock

Review by G. W. Hill

This is the album (and DVD) of a concert held in Holland in 1970. Comparisons to Woodstock are perhaps a bit over-rated, but not entirely lacking in validity. The biggest issue with the audio disc (it's a two CD set) is the audio quality. I mean, it's more or less par for the course for live recordings of the era, but I wish it were better quality. There are some great performances here. The video either seems to have better audio or it's just that paired with the video it's not as big a detriment. Either way, though, with this awesome set of music, this is well worth having.



[Return](#)

Track by Track Review

Disc 1

Cuby & The Blizzards - Dust My Blues

This smoking hot blues rock tune feels just a bit like Cream. The guitar soloing is quite good and the cut is high energy.

Canned Heat - Human Condition

This energized tune is trademark Canned Heat. The higher register vocals and the retro sounding bluesy rock work well together. At times this is almost country music.

Canned Heat - So Sad

Personally, I think this is stronger than the other Canned Heat song. The sound here isn't as good and the vocals get lost in the mix, but this is harder rocking and perhaps more like the Heat's take on the kind of sound The Who created. It even seems to share some territory with both The Animals and Led Zeppelin. There are also some bits that make me think of the Doors quite a bit. This is a smoking hot tune.

Livin' Blues - Big Road Blues

This occupies some of the same musical territory as Canned Heat, but has more of a true blues vibe to it. It's another good tune.

Al Stewart - Zero She Flies

This is essentially a folk rock tune. It's not bad and has some soaring moments, but the sound quality really hurts it.

Quintessence - Giants

Here's another smoking hot bluesy rocker. I've never heard these guys before but they remind me a bit of a cross between Them (think "Gloria") and the bluesy side of Jethro Tull with a little War thrown into the mix. There might be some Doors and Hawkwind in the mix, too.

East of Eden - The Sun of East

This is another band I've never heard of before. They have moments where they call to mind Jefferson Airplane. They also have a lot of progressive rock built into their sound. They run through several variations of a harder rocking motif for five minutes or so (this song is over fifteen minutes in length). Then they drop it to a mellower motif over which violin solos. As that continues it gets quite intense and starts to build back out into more rocking territory. There are definitely similarities to Hawkwind here. Rather than fully working out to hard edged rock, they drop it to somewhat random psychedelic weirdness. Then it coalesces into another mellow jam for a time. The more rock sounds emerge again and start to bring it back out from there. That eventually evolves into a psychedelic meets blues rock jam. As a saxophone comes over the top, I'm again reminded of Hawkwind. More proggy jamming emerges after that section. Eventually that turns more towards pure jam band or psychedelic rock. Another Hawkwind like grind takes it. As some world music comes over the top later the references to progressive rock become valid once more. This doesn't so much end as it does move straight into their next tune.

East of Eden - Irish Theme

This is considerably shorter and, as one might guess from the title, quite Celtic in nature. They rock



out through most of the tune and this seems to anticipate a lot of the Celtic inspired rock that has come out in the last couple decades. They also drop it down. In typical Celtic fashion there's a "let's speed this up section." While the other song had vocals, this one is purely instrumental.

Country Joe - Freedom

This is an acoustic guitar based rendition of this classic song. It's quite trademark Country Joe in sound, but is perhaps one of the best performances I've heard from him.

Dr John - Mardi Gras Day

Zydeco meets rock and soul on this classy jam. The female support vocals add a lot of the tune has a lot of energy. I'm not a big fan of drum solos, but I like the one here.

Family - Drowned in Wine

Okay I know people like this group, but I can't stand this song. The "goat ba-a-a-a" vocals are horrible. The music is alright, but not special enough to excuse those vocals. Wow. This song sucks!

Disc 2

Santana - Gumbo

The killer Latin meets high energy rock and roll sound of this jam is classic. Santana solos like crazy over the top at times, but other musicians here get opportunities to shine, too.

Santana - Savor

More of a trademark Santana jam, the band are on fire here. Unfortunately, the sound isn't very good.

Santana - Jingo

Of the three Santana songs here, this is the best one to my ear. For one thing, it's just a better song. Secondly, the sound seems a little better. It's a real scorcher.

Jefferson Airplane - White Rabbit

The Airplane deliver the classic tune here. The performance seems kind of loose. The sound detracts from the enjoyment. Blasts of feedback are pretty distracting.

Jefferson Airplane - The Ballad of You and Me and Pooneil

As much as "White Rabbit" is the big Airplane hit from the time, I've always liked this song more. It's got a lot of that multiple lines of vocals at odd angles from one another that were part of what made this band so cool. It's also more of a rocking jam. This still gets some feedback problems, but it's not as bad as those on "White Rabbit."

It's A Beautiful Day - Wasted Union Blues

I've always felt there was a lot of that Jefferson Airplane kind of sound in this band. With this song following the Airplane, that's even more obvious. It wouldn't be a big stretch to think this was The Airplane. This is a classic blues rock turned psychedelic jam. It gets quite intense at times and rather noisy. Part of that noisy nature comes from the sound quality of this recording, though. They work through several shifts and changes and this is one crazed piece as it continues.

It's A Beautiful Day - Bulgaria

Here's another killer It's a Beautiful Day jam. In a lot of ways this feels much like there previous tunes. At least it has the same basic musical concepts.

T Rex - By the Light of the Magical Moon

I've never gotten the whole T-Rex things. I mean, the warbly vocals are tough for me to take. This song isn't all that special if you remove those or at least overlook them. Additionally, the recording here seems really marred by a poor tape. This is another tune that's well worth skipping over in my opinion.

The Byrds - Old Blue

This Byrds rocker has a lot of country in the mix. It's a hot tune and played well. The sound is a little better here.

The Flock - Big Bird

Here's a band I heard of, but had never really heard before. I like combination of zydeco, Dixieland, bluegrass and rock music here. The vocals are a bit understated, but they fire this thing out into some smoking hot instrumental interplay on the break.

Soft Machine - Esther's Nose Job

This instrumental is a great Soft Machine tune. It's got the hard rocking progressive rock sound that they managed to pull off frequently. It's always exciting and runs through a number of intriguing changes.

Pink Floyd – Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun

I wish the sound was better here. That said, it's not actually that bad. And the Floyd's performance of this classic psychedelia meets space rock jam is magical. They are on fire here. I can only imagine what it must have been like to be in the audience for this.

Pink Floyd - A Saucerful of Secrets

Another early Pink Floyd classic, this one seems to suffer a bit more in the sound department. It's still an exciting jam and well worth having.

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