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DVD REVIEWS



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Living Colour: New Morning: The Paris Concert (2007)

Though the Bad Brains and Fishbone preceded them, Living Colour was a pivotal hard rock/borderline metal sensation of the late eighties and early nineties. The fact the members are all black and play heavy music with a guitarist who sets precedents for guitar shredding velocity once made Living Colour something of an unfortunate novelty. Of course, the fact their talent has always spoken far louder than the tint of their skin has proven Living Colour anything but a flavor-of-the-day fad.

Living Colour: New Morning: The Paris Concert (2007)
Music Video Distribution

107 mins. · Not Rated
16x9

Format
DVD

Audio
English - DD 5.1

Subtitles
None

Extras

Starring
Doug Wimbish, Vernon Reid, Will Calhoun, Corey Glover

Review by
[Ray Van Horn, Jr.](#)

Rating

Pick any member of Living Colour and you can focus directly on that player, be it the precise rock and tribal rhythms laid down by drummer Will Calhoun, or the way bassist Doug Wimbish (who has long made original bass man Muzz Skillings an afterthought since taking over on Living Colour's 1993 Stain album) can turn his instrument into a low-end snarling lead guitar as much as turn the thing into a fornicating four string funk prod. How about Corey Glover, the soul of Living Colour who brings the echoes of an inner city Baptist church and tongue-twisting scat to his repertoire of vocal twists? Then of course there's Vernon Reid, one of rock's underrated giants of the frets; very few can keep up with the man's dexterous speed-strumming and noisome solos which create blissful characters of sonic din.

Living Colour's ride to prominence was concurrent with King's X, who have enjoyed the company of dUg Pinnick's soulful wails amidst their Texas-bred and Beatles-wed tone rock. For awhile, Living Colour was momentarily the hottest thing since a tanning bed with their 1988 debut album Vivid and its breakout single "Cult of Personality."

Living Colour of course found ways to be controversial in their music, be it the direct attack against racism with "Funny Vibe," the frayed edge of relationship stability on "Love Rears its Ugly Head," a snub-nosed attack in the face of corporate exploitation with "Type" and of course, the one-time American obsession with all that is Presley on "Elvis is Dead." Hell, even the metrosexual phenomenon today was roasted by Living Colour two decades ago with "Glamour Boys."

Said forced confrontation turned casual listeners away as quickly as they'd come to Living Colour's cause (failing to grasp the cultural unity and anti-figurehead messages as they caterwauled along to "Cult of Personality"), but aside from using their music as pulpits for societal change, Living Colour first and foremost showed off their splendid musicianship.

Catch these guys live and yeah, Corey Glover might goof around with songs he's had to deliver for many years, and yeah, Living Colour can dally on occasion while experimenting with their instruments onstage, audience or no. However, these guys gel as well as anyone who's been around the block a few times, even with a temporary layoff following the Stain album.

New Morning: The Paris Concert catches up with Living Colour circa 2007, already four years after their most recent offering Collideoscope. Honestly, even with their continuous dicking over the primary rhythm of "Type," the band ushers excitement in a hurry for their attentive audience at the New Morning club in Paris.

Moving at a mostly brisk pace through staples such as "Memories Can't Wait," "Funny Vibe," "Glamour Boys," "Middle Man" and "Ignorance is Bliss," New Morning: The Paris Concert is the encapsulation of a previously damned good band evolved into a deadly important band. Watching each band member excel at his craft

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between familiar licks is almost hard to keep up with, particularly since Vernon Reid and Doug Wimbish command their sides of the stage and operate both independently and cohesively. Take your eyes off of one and you're likely to miss something ultra-rad the other is doing. Watch the crowd at New Morning studying like acolytes and you'll get the picture.

Doug Wimbish is especially allowed to shine in this concert as Living Colour reveals why they selected him in the first place after Muzz Skillings departed. Stain bore evidence that Wimbish could pound out his notes with severity, while these days, he portrays more character on his bass bearing influence from Larry Graham of Sly and the Family Stone, Bootsy Collins of Parliament, some of Prince's former associates and even Iron Maiden's Steve Harris. Wimbish's rounded strikes and drippy note slides are perfected with the same wrist slashing of his shotgun rider on the six string.

Will Calhoun has a few flashy drum solos, particularly notable the extensive sequence where he fuses rootsy percussion as well as electronic supplementation into his relaxed skins jam. Together, the groove emitted from Calhoun is unlike ego-flared prototype rock drum solos and it's quite easy to bob along to. Meanwhile, Corey Glover seldom misses a note and if he does, he tends to chuckle through it or at least spew out a yukkety line of gibberish to cover it up.

Though the DVD's track listing fails to credit "Time's Up," that manic aggressive cut leads into the band's characteristic finale, "Cult of Personality." Along the way, Living Colour tosses out a smackerel of tunes from Collideoscope such as "Song Without Sin," "Sacred Ground," "Nova" and the appropriately lofty "Flying." They even do a sweetly accurate cover of The Temptations' seventies funk classic "Papa Was a Rolling Stone" and a snazzy send-up of Jimi Hendrix's "Crosstown Traffic." Considering they used to do Bad Brains covers frequently at their shows, Living Colour's choice of covers these days are more reflective of traditional immortals instead of hardcore milestones.

Though other bands such as 24-7 Spyz failed to capitalize on the barriers smashed open by Living Colour, a new statement had been declared by the latter, one in which it became okay for whites to dig rap and soul and blacks to dig rock 'n roll. After all, when you watch Vernon Reid sizzle out some Howlin' Wolf-esque trad blues and rock chops merely in improv fashion, much less his scorching delivery in song transit, you have to wonder why the hell there were division lines in music to begin with...

Oaks, PA

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