

BUICK CITY COMPLEX

28 JULY 2011

Ian Hunter - Strings Attached



I bought this Concert DVD on its release in 2004 but have only recently acquired a surround sound set up to fully appreciate it.

Most people have heard of seventies glam rock act Mott the Hoople, if only for the single "All the Young Dudes" and long term fans from the 1960s and 1970s have followed lead singer Ian Hunter's solo career with a mixture of frustration and admiration. This very English (and criminally under-rated) singer songwriter has released more than a dozen studio albums in a somewhat spotty solo career but the highlights are high indeed. Until now there has been scarcely any worthwhile footage of Ian Hunter performing live so the long-awaited DVD, "Strings Attached" was always going to be required viewing.

Universal released the set with only basic monochrome artwork and no liner notes, clearly aiming it at existing fans. Video and sound though are top quality, as of course they should be these days. Seventeen songs that lend themselves to arrangement

ABOUT ME



PERFECT VIRGO

CHARLOTTETOWN,
PRINCE EDWARD
ISLAND, CANADA

Buick City Complex

is where short stories, essays, diary entries, poetry or music reviews have appeared since 2004, often accompanied by a photo.

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with strings have made the set list but this is not just a typical Ian Hunter set with accompanying strings. No, all the songs have been rearranged (some fairly heavily) for a seventeen-piece string ensemble called the Trondheim Soloists. This is IH's show and he rightly takes centre stage, playing acoustic guitar or singing with hand-held mic. Long time guitarist Andy York plays acoustic and occasionally electric, while there are Scandinavian guitar, keys and drums lurking well into the shadows backstage. Songs like Boy, Waterlow, Irene Wilde and Michael Picasso sound stunning and Ships will surely bring a lump even to the hardest throat.

I am uneasy about 23A Swan Hill and Once Bitten Twice Shy though, which have lost their power and bite and Memphis is barely recognisable. However by the time we reach the rousing finale of Saturday Gigs, it has become quite apparent that IH is taking this opportunity to present the songs to us afresh. His voice is simply superb and I really believe I have never heard him singing better. The violinists and cellists look full of respect for him and are clearly enjoying themselves.

The star of the Bonus Features is a fascinating thirty minute interview. A Norwegian interviewer asks the obvious questions but allows IH the opportunity to say as much or as little as he fancies. It doesn't come across as over-rehearsed and offers a rare first-hand insight into the man's thoughts. There is also a six minute film of behind-the-scenes clips where we hear from Joe Elliott, Campbell Devine, son Jesse Hunter and daughter Tracie Hunter (so very like her old man!) Additionally there are complete Mott the Hoople and IH discographies and a short biography from Campbell Devine.

I enjoyed the DVD for several reasons but on a purely personal level I prefer the hard-rocking electric sets he plays live. Who knows perhaps one day we may be treated to a DVD of one of the Astoria gigs I attended.

FROM THE MIND OF PERFECT VIRGO

2 COMMENTS:



Russell 'C.J.' Duffy said...

Never got into Ian Hunter although I did like Mott The Hoople as they had one of the great band names. Maybe I should browse some old CD's of his

5:57 PM

Perfect Virgo said...

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CJ Duffy

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PEI Writes

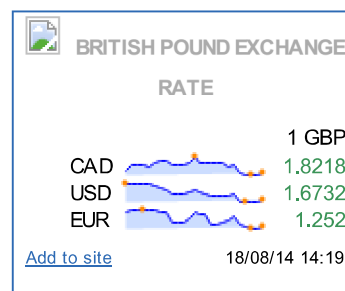
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Ian Hunter - Strings Attached
dog days

Some of his solo work is superb. He writes both stomping rockers and heartbreaking ballads. I'll add a couple of his albums to our next exchange of memory sticks.

7:00 PM

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