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## [Charlie Daniels Band – Live at Rockpalast \(2012\)](#)

Posted by [Fred Phillips](#)

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When you're used to the ultra-conservative Charlie Daniels of today, it's easy to forget that he was once a Southern-rock wild man. That's where *Live at Rockpalast* comes in.

Much like the ZZ Top Rockpalast performance that was featured on their *Double Down* DVD, this captures Charlie Daniels in the prime of his power on the German television show. Though I've seen Daniels at least seven or eight times over the years, I've never seen him quite like this. Recorded in November of 1980, this DVD showcases a Southern rock powerhouse of a band that delivers an absolutely scorching set of songs, many of them deep tracks from the albums *Million Mile Reflections* and *Full Moon*.



The performance is much more of an Allman Brothers-type jam session with some hot guitars and honky tonk piano. It starts off with the ZZ Top-flavored "Funky Junky" which sets the tone. Then it blasts straight into one of my favorite CDB tunes, "Trudy," a funky number that tells the story of a Louisiana boy in a barroom misadventure that's got him stuck in a Dallas jailhouse. The song was so good that Daniels had to do it twice – on his 1970 debut and on the 1974 classic *Fire on the Mountain*. The band, particularly bass player Charlie Hayward, thumps through the song with glee.

The Charlie Daniels Band was also truly a band at this time. Daniels himself, though he did most of the vocals, wasn't the focal point on stage. It was a complete group effort, and the DVD even showcases pianist Taz Di Gregorio and Tom Crain on a couple of songs apiece. Di Gregorio gets the rocking "Jitterbug" and the soulful blues number "No Potion for the Pain." Crain, who could almost serve as Daniels' double, gets the progressive "Blind Man" and the more traditional country of "Cumberland Mountain No. 9." In between, they deliver a stirring rendition of "Reflections," Daniels' tribute to Elvis Presley, Janis Joplin and Ronnie Van Zant, and an impressive version of the Spanish-flavored "El Toreador."

The hits are well-represented, too, with another of my favorites, the Southern rocker "The Legend of Woolley Swamp" coming early in the set, before they settle in for a string of them toward the end, beginning with "In America." But even those get some tweaks. "Long-Haired Country Boy," which I long considered a personal anthem when I was one, becomes more of an organic Southern rock groover than the country acoustic piece it originally was. Most impressive, though, is "Uneasy Rider." Originally a bluegrass influenced song, the band kicks it up here into a swinging rock number that's one of my favorite of the set.

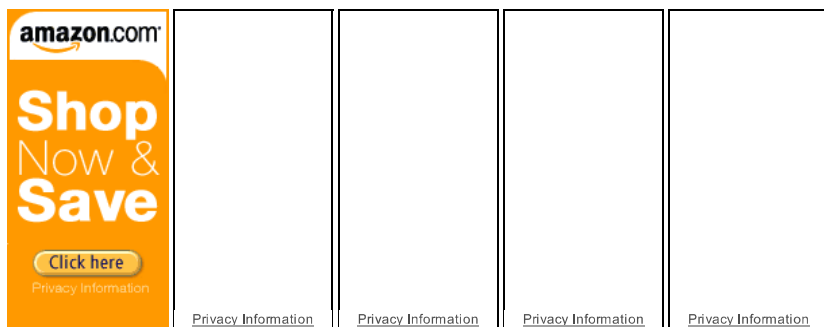
**[\[SOMETHING ELSE! REWIND: 1976's "Saddle Tramp" -- one part Marshall Tucker Band, one part Grateful Dead -- showed there was more to Charlie Daniels than "The Devil Went Down To Georgia."\]](#)**

Daniels has become almost synonymous with country fiddle over the years, but on this night he didn't even pull the fiddle out of its case until the 12th song, "Cumberland Mountain No. 9." When he finally did, though, he put it to good use on the final four tunes of the night. Up next is the biggest hit, "The Devil Went Down to Georgia," and they blow the roof off the place with it. I've always maintained that the devil got shafted in this contest. I'd take that funky rock groove and shrieking fiddle over Johnny's tune any day. Still would on this performance.

For the encore, Daniels shreds his bow again on “The South’s Gonna Do It Again,” dedicated to Van Zant, and they close the evening with an explosive, nearly nine-minute rendition of “Orange Blossom Special” that shows just why he’s become synonymous with country fiddle.

For guys like me, who have seen Daniels numerous times but only in his later years, this *Rockpalast* performance is like a window into a world I never got to experience. Daniels still had just a teeny bit of hippie and rocker in him. He still got stoned in the morning and drunk in the afternoon and took another toke instead of telling another joke in “Long Haired Country Boy,” and the devil was still a son-of-a-bitch in “The Devil Went Down to Georgia” — though the peace sign on his car in “Uneasy Rider” had already been changed to a gun rack. Daniels was backed up by a group of musicians that could play their butts off, and there was a ton of energy and attitude rolling off the stage.

I’ve enjoyed every CDB show I’ve ever seen, but they were nothing like this.



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