



Jeff Healey and The Jazz Wizards
Beautiful Noise

MVD Visual (MVD4950D)

Grade: ★★★★★

At his musical core, Jeff Healey was a jazz enthusiast. Louis Armstrong tunes from the 1920s and 1930s were among his favorites. And, as entertainingly demonstrated on "Beautiful Noise," the blind blues-rock guitarist who died in 2008 was no slouch on the trumpet. This DVD, filmed inside a church a snowy day in January 2006 for Canadian television, includes Healey leading the tight and animated Jazz Wizards through 11 performances from the classic jazz era — including "Bugle Call Rag" and "I'm Gonna Lock My Heart and Throw Away the Key" from Armstrong's repertoire.

Healey clearly was in his element here, his warm voice breathing new life into vintage songs and revealing another side of himself as an artist — although on "Darktown Strutter's Ball," he does indulge in the intricate guitar-on-lap blues that made him famous. Healey's appreciation of the genre is apparent, and it's easy for viewers to end up smiling right along with him.

— Michael Popke