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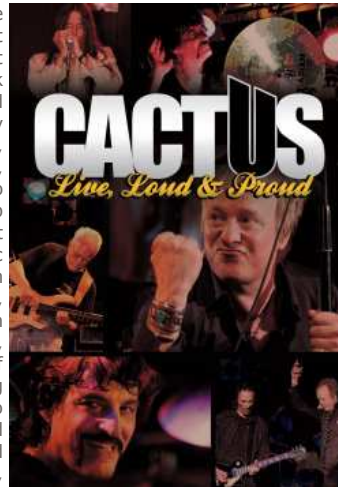
Cactus: Live, Loud & Proud

Score: **75%**
 Rating: **Not Rated**
 Publisher: **MVD Entertainment Group**
 Region: **A**
 Media: **DVD/1**
 Running Time: **60 Mins.**
 Genre: **Live Performance/Documentary/Musical**
 Audio: **5.1 Surround**

Features:

- Interviews With the Band
- Music Video for "The Groove"
- Testimonials

If you're under 40, there's a good chance you've never heard of **Cactus**, but it's a sure thing that you've heard the bands they influenced. Most recently, there's the example of Ohio-based Black Keys, which sound like a duo version of this hard rocking band. Other notable proteges - by influence at least - of **Cactus** include Van Halen, so whether you're part of Gen X or younger, there's something in the music likely to speak to you. It's hard to watch four older guys troop up on stage without feeling a glimmer of doubt, but **Cactus: Live, Loud & Proud** is not an ironic title. The guys in the band, at least two of them drawn from the original group formed in 1969, are probably lucky to be alive after riding high through the nihilistic '70s. They're definitely loud, not only in terms of amplification, but because of lead singer Jimmy Kunes' (Savoy Brown) belting out vocal lines and howling with enough grit to strip paint off the back wall of the club. The band released a new album titled "**Cactus V**" and toured in support of the record several years ago, which is the source for this video.



Classic hard rock owes a lot to blues, and you can here plenty of what would pop up again in the '80s with groups like Z.Z. Top and Van Halen. These groups formed a junction between guitar blues and metal, but their roots began with groups like **Cactus** in the previous decade. Jeff Beck, another original member not featured on this video, went on to make some of the same flavor of what we'd now just call traditional or "hard" rock. The difference between hearing replays on the radio and watching **Cactus: Live, Loud & Proud**, is that you get to really appreciate the musicianship of these guys. Drummer Carmine Appice is a powerhouse, and Tim Bogert on bass is a good rhythm-keeper in addition to performing a killer solo during this session. Age doesn't diminish what musicians are capable of producing, as these guys demonstrate. A nice touch is the extra feature with testimonials from bands like Megadeth, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Scorpions, and Anvil talking about the influence **Cactus** had on them.

The less enjoyable moments on this video are snippets of film superimposed on the live performance, and weird filters that do things like break the screen up into 12 little squares. Lava-lamp animation and photo effects do nothing to improve the quality of the video, and really distract from the performers. Whether the band requested this stuff, or whether it was forced on them, it's just bad. To see this taken to an extreme, just fire up the bonus video for the song titled, "The Groover," where you can watch bikini-clad girls wagging in front of some kind of green screen, with images of the band playing behind them. It's like the videographer took inspiration from *Napoleon Dynamite*, but threw out the irony. And the girls are unspeakably unsexy...

Beyond those unfortunate elements, some nice extras round out the live performance, including current interviews with band members about their experience in the glory days of **Cactus**. A godsend for fans, and a nice introduction for younger people interested in finding out more about the roots of today's hard-rocking bands.

-Fridtjof, GameVortex Communications
 AKA Matt Paddock

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