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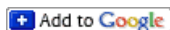
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**Echo & the Bunnymen: Dancing Horses**

[Music Video Distributors](#) // Unrated // \$19.95 // June 26, 2007

Review by [Jamie S. Rich](#) | posted June 26, 2007 | [E-mail the Author](#) | [Start a Discussion](#)

**THE MOVIE:**

I've seen Echo & the Bunnymen multiple times over the last fifteen years, and they are probably one of the most unpredictable live acts I've encountered. Some nights you'll go, and it's one of the most blistering music sets you've seen in your life; other nights, it's about as dull as doing other people's dishes.

The new DVD, *Echo & the Bunnymen - Dancing Horses*, captures one of the good nights. Recorded in November 2005 at London's Shepherd's Bush Empire, the Bunnymen deliver a tight set of songs old and new, including four from their most recent album, *Siberia*, itself a must for Bunnymen fans. Old favorites like "Never Stop" and "Rescue" naturally shine bright above the rest as far as manic pop thrills are concerned, but newbies like "Scissors in the Sand" have a skuzzy rock quality that, for me, defines the current state of affairs in the live Bunnymen camp. This DVD reminded me of when I caught them on the same tour, their stage presentation showing how more contemporary acts like Oasis and Black Rebel Motorcycle Club have pretty much cribbed their entire act from the Liverpool stalwarts.

As *Dancing Horses* started, though, I wasn't sure it was going to work. All of the elements that can make Echo & the Bunnymen boring to watch were there, and having them boxed into the frame of a television screen seemed like the worst way to emphasize them. The band barely moves, made all the worse by the fact that 75% of the time, they are completely cloaked in shadow. This lack of dynamics doesn't particularly play to the camera. The film crew seems conscious of this and seems determined to get around it by making sure they

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★★★★★

**VIDEO**

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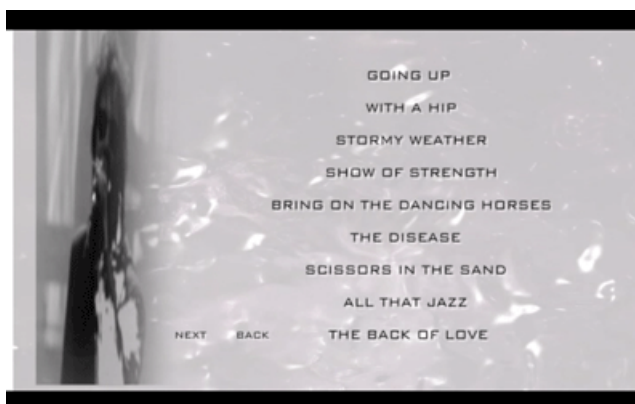
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never stay in one place too long. While there aren't sweeping crane shots or anything, there are enough camera set-ups that the editor can switch around his angles on a regular enough basis to keep the otherwise static stage show moving.

The band plays like a storm, the double guitars of Will Sergeant and Gordon Goudie creating the vast layers of melodic noise that has been the band's enduring signature. The set is well constructed, punctuating noisy rockers like "Villiers Terrace" and "The Cutter" with softer, dreamy tunes like "Bring on the Dancing Horses," "Nothing Lasts Forever," and Donnie Darko's favorite song, "The Killing Moon." What really sets a good Bunnymen night apart, however, is how engaged singer Ian McCulloch is in the performance. His voice is a lot raspier than it used to be, and he doesn't dance around as much as when I saw him in the mid-90s (if he does at all, which is not really; you've never seen a singer wear a heavy coat through a whole show and not break a sweat the way he does), but he is incredibly present on *Dancing Horses*. The show ends with the softer "Ocean Rain," and his voice is honeyed and sweet. Maturity has actually improved it.



#### The full song list:

Going Up  
 With a Hip  
 Stormy Weather  
 Show of Strength  
 Bring on the Dancing Horses  
 The Disease  
 Scissors in the Sand  
 All That Jazz  
 The Back of Love  
 The Killing Moon  
 In the Margins  
 Never Stop  
 Villiers Terrace  
 Of a Life  
 Rescue  
 The Cutter  
 Nothing Lasts Forever  
 Lips Like Sugar  
 Ocean Rain

As you can see, it's a strong selection, playing to all manner of Bunnymen fans and covering a career that has spanned three decades.

#### THE DVD

**Video:**

Letterboxed in a 16:9 aspect ratio, *Echo & the Bunnymen - Dancing Horses* is well-shot and the image quality is crisp. With a dark show like this one, the picture could have ended up grainy, but Ian and the boys come through clear.

**Sound:**

There are PCM Stereo and 5.1 Dolby mixes to choose from. *Dancing Horses* is a really good live recording, and the music sounds great, even with the volume cranked (as it should be). I did notice two pops of static, though, once during "Never Stop" and once during "The Cutter," both of which surprised me.

**Extras:**

48-minutes of interviews with Will Sergeant and Ian McCulloch are included on the DVD. They were shot separately, but both were asked the same questions, covering the *Siberia* album, how they approach touring, and other similar topics. It's kind of dry, to be honest, since keeping them apart and not having the interviewer be part of the final product means a dialogue never gets going, and it can be kind of a slog to get through. These guys are about as slow-moving offstage as they are onstage.

**FINAL THOUGHTS:**

**Recommended.** As with any concert film, particularly one this straight-ahead, your interest will depend on how much you're into the band. If you're a fan of Echo & the Bunnymen, then *Dancing Horses* should be a no-risk acquisition for you. Capturing them in full form back in 2005, they play a mean set of old favorites and new stand-outs with full rock 'n' roll conviction. It's not visually exciting, but the music wins out, which is what it's all about with the Bunnymen anyway.



*Jamie S. Rich is a novelist and comic book writer. His next book is entitled [Have You Seen the Horizon Lately?](#) and is due for release from Oni Press this summer. It follows up on both of his successful books from 2006, the pop-culture hit [The Everlasting](#), and his original graphic novel with Joëlle Jones, [12 Reasons Why I Love Her](#). Rich is currently writing the ongoing independent comic book series [Love the Way You Love](#).*

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