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Echo & The Bunnymen: Dancing Horses



This entry was posted on 7/5/2007 11:45 AM and is filed under [DVD Reviews](#).

Fronted by the gloriously gloomy Ian McCulloch, Echo & the Bunnymen's melancholic post-punk sound — studded with elements of both New Wave and psychedelic rock — brought the group a slew of hits in the United Kingdom in the early 1980s. In the United States, meanwhile, the band attracted a significant cult following after their self-titled release in 1987. Through the past two-and-a-half decades, the group has undergone a number of lineup changes, somewhat messy break-ups and half-hearted reformations, but earlier in 2007 they re-signed to their original record label, cut a new record and embarked on a mini-tour.

The performance on the new concert DVD *Dancing Horses* was filmed and recorded at the Shepherd's Bush Empire in the UK in November of 2005. It includes a robust 20-song set, and **serves as outstanding proof of the group's songwriting ability and musicianship, if not necessarily their stage presence.** "Going Up" kicks things off, followed by "The Back of Love," "Bring on the Dancing Horses," "Scissors in the Sand" and "The Cutter." It's not until "With a Hip" and "Stormy Weather," though, that the show really gets some lift, though McCulloch promptly squanders a good portion of that with an affected, cigarette-smoking performance of "The Killing Moon." The cyclical guitar work and steady bass line of "Never Stop," scores high marks, and the show's simple but artistic direction effectively puts one in the moment, but overall the Bunnymen could stand to benefit from an infusion of dynamism. "Of a Life," "The Disease," "All That Jazz," "In the Margins," "Villier's Terrace," "Show of Strength," "Rescue," "Nothing Lasts Forever," "Ocean Rain" and the radio hit "Lips Like Sugar" comprise the rest of the disc's set list.

Housed in a clear plastic Amray case, *Dancing Horses* is presented in a 16x9 aspect ratio, with 5.1 Dolby digital surround sound and PCM stereo audio tracks, the latter of which actually seems a bit stronger and clearer. The disc's main motion menu screen gives way to the 86-minute concert, **but the real added value of this release lies in its 47 minutes of interview offering with McCulloch and Sergeant**, who in their separate chats dish on everything from the origin and metaphorical nature of the title of their new album, *Siberia* ("I don't wanna say juxtapose, because it's a crap word..." says Sergeant, amusingly), to how their songwriting collaborations have changed over the years (in short, much less in-room jamming these days). Title cards with the off-screen interviewer's questions set the table, and McCulloch and Sergeant take it from there in fascinating fashion, with only the thick brogue of the former giving one occasional pause. **C+ (Concert) B (Disc)**

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