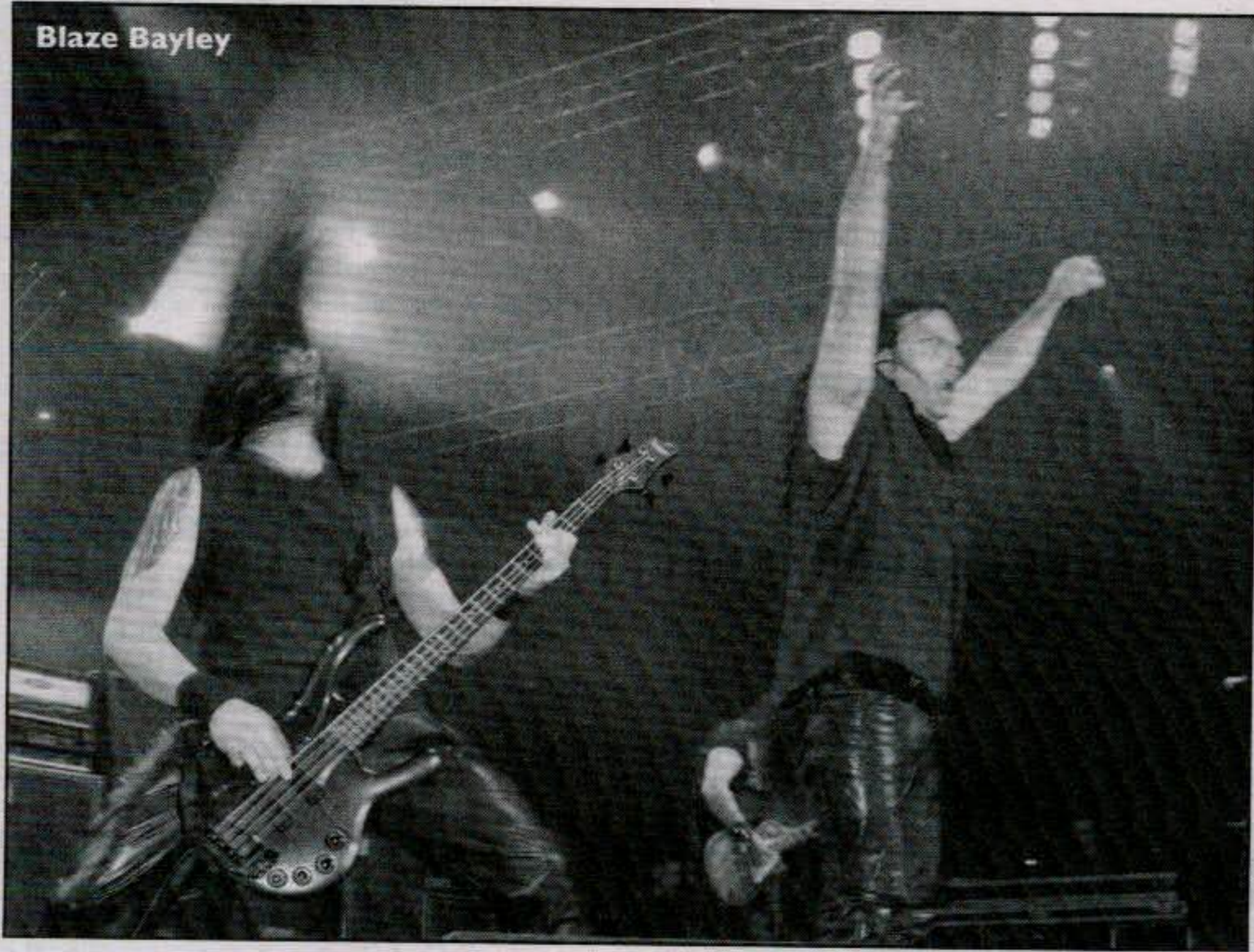


Blaze Bayley



Blaze Bayley
Alive In Poland
Metal Mind Productions

Metal Mind have immortalized yet another B-list metal act on DVD, and this time, it's Blaze Bayley. Blaze left Iron Maiden in 1999, and eight years and 50 pounds later, he's recorded his first DVD.

The main feature was recorded during the 21st Metalmania Festival in Katowice, Poland. As far as the audio and video standards go, this disc is quite good. But the performances of Blaze and his band just don't stand up. The performance is littered with sour notes, and the vocals just aren't quite there.

The disc is comprised mostly of Blaze's solo work, however there is also a healthy smattering of Iron Maiden tunes from his tenure with the band as well. It's a real shame that the band just doesn't do the songs justice.

Along with the fairly long main feature, you'll also get interviews with Blaze (by himself) and the band, a photo gallery, biography, discography, desktop images and a video clip. When all is said and done, this DVD just isn't worth the time or money. Do yourself a favour and pick up an Iron Maiden DVD instead. You'll hear to best songs on Blaze Bayley's disc, and they'll be played well.

• **Dave Sanders**

Elton John
Someone Like Me
Eagle Media

Sir Elton John has led an interesting life. He's been knighted, has had some of the biggest singles spanning multiple generations, and has inspired countless artists with his startling and charismatic stage personalities. All excellent reasons to give his massive catalogue a listen, and enough to inspire a documentary that you could never forget.

With these facts kept in mind, it's a hell of a mystery as to how *Someone Like Me* manages to undermine his amazing story with such spectacularity. A documentary of low-budget, late night TV caliber, it has two major flaws, two critical screw ups that will ruin the entire experience for even the most die hard fan.

First, the filmmakers skimped out on licensing, meaning at the mention of every song, generic bands playing nearly ambient piano rock kick in the background. Transitions, titles, and every interview throughout are littered with this unoriginal elevator music. Who would have thought that in a film about Elton John, the viewer might want to, oh, I don't know, actually hear some Elton John?

The second and perhaps more noticeable flaw fills up the entire middle section. The documentary transitions from the indisputably interesting story of a piano prodigy struggling to make it in the risky 70s music industry, into a 40 minute period of Billboard chart rankings and song titles. When the majority of the film could be compressed into a single shot, listing his singles and the respective years, you know something must be wrong.

• **Jordan Bloom**

Various Artists
Preserving Efforts Volume 1
MVD/Jasmatuph Productions

Ever get sick and tired of the same old hip-hop visuals that contain girls, cars and bling? *Preserving Efforts Volume 1* quenches the thirst of hip hop fans thirsty for viewing the clips of influential artists that seldom get played on television.

A project two years in the making, it features 14 innovative clips from around the world, including Atmosphere (US), Guru

(US), Def Tex (ENG), Pete Philly & Perquisite (NED), and Wordbuglar (CAN). Volume 1 also includes clips by seven Australian artists including Bliss N Eso, Koolism, Muphin, TZU, Urthboy and many more. Furthermore, 13 of the 14 clips included have never before appeared in DVD format.

Each video has a summary screen of info, and that's where this hop-hop DVD distinguishes itself from what's expected from other genres. Nowhere else will you find a summary of how much the video cost to produce (as little as \$100, genuinely surprisingly), plus location info and how long it took to make each one. Unfortunately, there are no other extras, such as behind-the-scenes footage, which would have added value to what otherwise is a collection of maybe hard-to-find, but certainly already available, clips.

Which leads us to the main problem with this compilation: all of these videos, and thousands more, are available on YouTube and/or some similar sites, delivered without further charge to anybody with a computer, an internet collection, and the desire to explore a range of music. These clips specifically probably appeared online a loooong time before this DVD's Australian release last year.

In view of such online clip abundance – remind me why this DVD needs to exist again??!

• **Mike Pathos**

Yes
Live at Montreaux 2003
Eagle Vision

Two things become apparent very quickly when watching this DVD. One is that there was a long ago time that most of us don't remember or understand as well as we should when musicians actually had to know how to play their instruments and play them well,