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Marc Almond

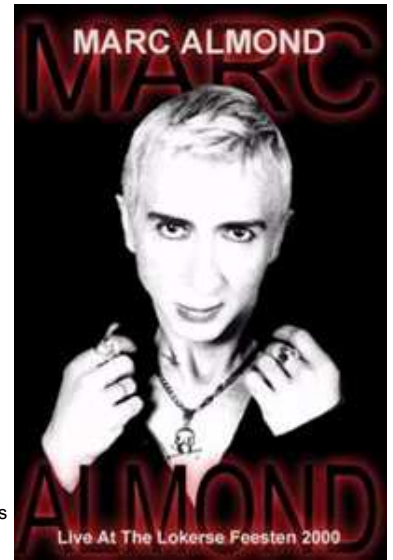
Live At Lokerse Feesten 2000 (Charly Films/ MVD Visual)
By **Craig Regala**

OK, **Marc Almond** hit the charts in the early '80s with one of the most enduring, wettest, sleazy hits of the synth-pop's "Second British Invasion," Soft Cell's "Tainted Love," a cover of Gloria Lewis' 1964 hit. You've heard it covered, you've heard it retooled, hell, I hope you've even heard the original version. It's great. She even married Marc Bolan of T-Rex. I mention all this because Marc Almond moved on to take a glam/R&B pop fusion through synth-pop (including a Hendrix cover) into the heights/depths of lurid pop from Europe, England, and the U.S., salted with a fin de siècle decadence owing to St. Jean Genet.

His music moved into a roughly similar terrain to Matt Johnson, who recorded under the name The The, whose records go from decent to great, including the pop classic "Soul Mining." Look: If it's good enough for an M&M's commercial, it's good enough for you. Both these guys went from early '80s art burble (Johnson's artier, Almond's poppier) to adopt a classic guitar, bass, drums, string 'n' keys set-up owing much to the late '50s/early '60s Roy Orbison approach of dramatic vocals and taut, roots-filled Americana itself reaching back to roots in European cabaret, folk, and flamenco. Hey, it works pretty good when you have the voice (not far off: Barry Manilow. Yeah, I'm a fan-i-low, esp. the first double live rec.), and the tunes to throw at it, and Mr. Almond does.

The guy's got like 30 plus records out there, and I don't know much about most of m, but I like everything I've heard, and adore 1986's *Mother Fist* and '93's *Live 12 Years of Tears*. This DVD is about a song and a half short of two hours, shot straight and no-frills. You realize the band is locked in and the boy can still sing. I like the takes on the early Soft Cell stuff at the end, and enjoyed everything else: '60s covers and all. Fuck, he's survived a motorcycle accident, been through the mill and back, and he's fairly inked: That's pretty rock and roll, eh?

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