

THE ZOMBIES - *Odessey & Oracle Revisited: The 40th Anniversary Concert* (MVD Visual)

Two years ago and four decades after their masterpiece *Odessey & Oracle* was released, the surviving members of the Zombies—Rod Argent, Colin Blunstone, Hugh Grundy, and Chris White—reunited to perform the album live for the first time, as their band had broken up before its original release. *Odessey & Oracle Revisited: The 40th Anniversary Concert* documents the entire night's concert of March 8, 2008, live at the Shepherd's Bush Empire in London.

To open the concert, Blunstone and Argent, sans the other original Zombies, recreate an audio chronology of their history, beginning with their earliest R&B covers and extending to Argent's '70s chart hits. It is immediately obvious that Blunstone's voice has lost none of its power or range in the intervening years. He effortlessly approaches these classic songs in their original keys, rendering a spine-tingling performance throughout the night. The backing musicians, all with connections to the original Zombies, provide excellent support, though extended guitar solos detract a bit from some interpretations. String quintet accompaniments, however, to songs from Blunstone's first solo LP, *One Year*, including Tim Hardin's "Misty Roses" and Denny Laine's "Say You Don't Mind," help make them highlights of the first set.



Following an informative introduction by music legend Al Kooper, an early champion of *Odessey & Oracle* in the US, Argent and Blunstone are joined by Grundy and White to begin the ethereal journey through the album's tales of loneliness and disillusionment, as depicted in "A Rose for Emily," "Beechwood Park," "Changes," and White's chilling anti-war song, "Butcher's Tale." These conflicts are ultimately resolved in the hopeful "This Will Be Our Year," the ebullient "Friends of Mine," and the optimistic '60s ethos of the hit single, "Time of the Season," the song that draws the sold-out crowd to its feet.

Each track is faithfully and lovingly recreated by the band, down to the close, complex harmonies and the use of an authentic Victorian pedal organ, yet these 40-years-on performances have their own unique qualities. The respect the members of the band have for each other is evident throughout the concert, and the night's dedication to deceased member Paul Atkinson renders the reunion all the more poignant.

While viewing *Odessey & Oracle Revisited*, it is apparent that this night was indeed extraordinary—a transcendent production four decades in the making, and the inspiring outcome makes it worth the wait. Included is a bonus documentary excerpt about the recording of the album, featuring current interviews with the Zombies and music expert Alec Palao. **(Alison Hayes)**