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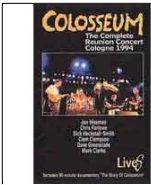
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DVD

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Colosseum

The Complete Reunion Concert, Cologne 1994

Angel Air/MVD

Stunning 1994 reunion show from the men who invented fusion...

Colosseum were one of the original jazz-rock pioneers. Between 1968 and 1971 they melted together jazz, blues and classical influences to create a new form of fusion. Sophomore album *Valentyne Suite* sealed their reputation as purveyors of complex, intellectual music and the band toured hard, going through several lineup changes. Perhaps their boldest move was to marry their progressive sound with vocals from leather-lunged soul singer Chris Farlowe, but constant work resulted in band burnout in 1971. Members went on to careers in other bands - Tempest, Atomic Rooster, Colosseum II - or as studio sessioneers.

Drummer and band leader Jon Hiseman finally caved in to pressure to reform the band in the early 90s, and a night from the triumphant reunion tour is captured here. It's spectacular; the music may be an acquired taste, but the musicianship is undeniably stunning. One man horn section Dick Heckstall-Smith plays with choppy aggression, often playing alto and soprano saxes simultaneously; guitarist Clem Clempson is a revelation, playing liquidly beautiful blues solos which make you wonder why it was that Clapton was worshipped as God. Keyboardist Dave Greenslade and Hiseman provide fewer fireworks but the heroically fat Farlowe is still in fine voice.

The DVD also includes a 90-minute documentary on the band's history, including early footage from the band's 60s heyday. It's overlong and a little too reliant on rambling reminiscence, but tells you all you need to know about the background to the show.

A deserving re-release for a wonderful postscript to the history of a great band.

By Clare O'Brien

This release was published on 16 Jan 2006.

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