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REVIEW**DVD Review: *Gillan - Live Edinburgh 1980***

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When people think of Ian Gillan, they think of Deep Purple. They think of "Smoke On The Water." His original stint in that legendary British rock band produced what are widely considered to be their three best studio albums, *In Rock*, *Fireball*, and *Machine Head*. They were followed by the essential live classic *Made In Japan*. After the rather disappointing *Who Do We Think We Are* was released in 1973, Gillan quit Deep Purple over creative differences with founding band member and guitarist Ritchie Blackmore, and went on to form his own band, The Ian Gillan Band, in 1975. They released three jazz/rock-flavored albums to little acclaim before revising the lineup, shortening the name to simply Gillan, and proceeding to rock out.

Live Edinburgh 1980 features a live performance that was originally recorded for Scottish TV (STV), and features the most renowned Gillan lineup of Bernie Tormé (guitar), John McCoy (bass), Colin Towns (keyboards), and Mick Underwood (drums). I must admit that I was mostly unfamiliar with Gillan's solo work until recently, but it was good to see that he was not just sitting around feeling sorry for himself between Deep Purple stints. Unfortunately, the main feature of this DVD only gives you a short glimpse, five songs lasting barely 25-minutes, of this excellent, but short-lived band.

The album *Glory Road* had just been released in 1980, and was already a huge success in Britain, where it entered the charts at number three. Gillan had just returned from a U.S.

tour promoting the album, and was now on the way to conquering his home turf. Gillan kicks things into overdrive immediately, opening the show with *Glory Road's* intense, speed-metal anthem "Unchain Your Brain," which makes Purple's "Speed King" sound like a smooth-jazz offering. They dramatically change the pace next, turning the old Leiber and Stoller classic, "Trouble," which was once made famous by Elvis Presley, into their own boogie-rock showcase. This song would appear a year later on Gillan's *Double Trouble* album.

"If You Believe Me" is an ultra-bluesy rocker that gives Tormé plenty of room to shine, as McCoy and Underwood lay down a steady groove behind him and Gillan adds some of his most impassioned vocals to make this one of the show's highlights. "Mutually Assured Destruction (M.A.D.)" follows, and was pretty forgettable, but they closed out the show in fine fashion with *Glory Road's* "No Easy Way." Towns kicks this one off with some dazzling honky-tonk-style piano and then changes it up during the second half with some Jan Hammer-like synth as he trades off with Tormé's killer slide riffs. As the song delves deeper into extended jam territory, Gillan takes to a set of congas and propels the song to a rousing finish.

The DVD is loaded with extras, which help to make up for the short main feature. Bonus features include archive performance footage of "Vengeance," "Smoke On The Water," and "Sleeping On The Job," but they are of such poor quality that only a fanatic could tolerate watching. A biography, photo gallery, and hour-long interview with all of the band members, except for Gillan himself, are also included. Surprisingly, each of these guys proceeded to trash Gillan, primarily over financial issues, during the last half of the interview. Lastly, a video for "Cannonball," a raucous, speed-metal-punk song performed by G.M.T., a band comprised of former Gillan band mates McCoy and Tormé, along with drummer Robin Guy, is also included.

The quality of the main feature was pretty decent considering the age and the source of

the material. The only audio track provided is a Dolby Digital stereo mix, but it sounds good when played loud enough. I preferred the sound of the straight stereo output over the Dolby Pro Logic decoded mix, which dulled the edges too much. The camera focused mainly on close-ups of Gillan, so you don't get to see as much of the other band members as I would have liked. Some cheesy fade in/out's were also used to transition each song, but overall it was fairly well shot.

In case you missed it, Gillan rejoined Deep Purple in 1984 and they are still going strong to this day, thanks to the help of guitar-wizard Steve Morse, who has handled the guitar duties since 1994. This DVD provides a short but worthwhile look at the prime solo years of this legendary rock vocalist and his excellent band.

Set List

01. Unchain Your Brain
02. Trouble
03. If You Believe Me
04. Mutually Assured Destruction (M.A.D.)
05. No Easy Way

Bonus Archive Footage

01. Vengeance
02. Smoke On The Water
03. Sleeping On The Job

Performance 7/10

Production 5/10

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