

Live At Iowa State University (DVD)

John Mayall's Bluesbreakers

Quantum Leap, 2008

<http://www.johnmayall.com>

REVIEW BY: [David Bowling](#)

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John Mayall is many times remembered for who has passed through his group than he is for his music. Such artists as Eric Clapton, Jack Bruce, Peter Green, Mick Taylor, Mick Fleetwood, John McVie, and a host of others are ex-Bluesbreakers.

John Mayall's Bluesbreakers: Live At Iowa State University was recorded in 1987. His band at the time consisted of dual guitarists Walter Trout and Coco Montoya with Bobby Hayes on bass and Paul Hines behind the drums. Mayall was in his mid-fifties at the time that this concert was recorded. He appears healthy and his voice is in fine shape. He even seems to be having fun on stage.

The music contained on this DVD is excellent. I wish I could say the same for the packaging. The songs are listed out of order both on the package and on the DVD menu itself. Some of the songs are not complete but are joined in progress. There is little flow between many of the tracks, which takes away from an actual concert experience. The extras promise a backstage interview with John Mayall, which is one question that is not answered. I am going to take their word that the concert was actually recorded at

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Ads by  Iowa State University.

The music itself is superb, though. John Mayall plays the blues and nothing but the blues. The band is tight and the sound is full. Mayall always sounds better when he carries two guitarists in his band. He and Walter Trout trade creative leads on the guitar. Trout is an excellent guitarist who can get almost a weeping sound from his instrument. Mayall also rotates to keyboards and harmonica with equal aplomb.

"Parchment Farm" is an old Mose Allison tune. It features frenetic harmonica playing by Mayall. Very few people can use the harmonica as a lead instrument, but Mayall pulls it off complete with some improvisation but always returns to the song's original structure.

"Birthday Blues" is a song that focuses on Mayall's bluesy vocal. He accompanies himself on keyboards, and this is as close to a one man show as he will come in this concert.

The Little Walter instrumental tune, "It Ain't Right," is a complete group effort. It features a two-guitar attack by Trout and Montoya alongside some more harmonica by Mayall. It is a virtual assault on the senses. The different guitar styles of Trout

and Montoya are obvious on their respective solos. Trout is more of a classic and technical blues guitarist, while Montoya is a rock/blues fusion player. It is a good union and none of the musicians intrude upon the other's territory.

Trout plays lead guitar almost as much as Mayall. "Little Girl," "Steppin' Out," and "One Life To Live" all showcase his skills. He is just one of those creative guitarists who can make his instrument talk. His tone is also crystal clear.

"Room To Move" can almost be considered to be funky blues if there is such a thing. It is a virtual extravaganza of Mayall's harmonica playing and a must-listen for any blues lover.

John Mayall's Bluesbreakers: Live At Iowa State University proves that John Mayall was still on top of his game in 1987. Ignore the package and just listen to the music.

Rating: [B+](#)

User Rating: Not Yet Rated

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