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REVIEWS

Reviews continued from page 51

Daughter of the Hillside," "I Know You Know Me"'s joyful boogying, and "Reconsider Baby"'s flounce of languorous R&B, for starters.

Webb's phenomenal, lead guitarist Gary Davies smokes, and the rhythm section is solid as Gibraltar, as fans can see and hear for themselves. A stunning show in both formats.

— Jo-Ann Greene

Gillan

No Easy Way



Angel Air (273) CD/DVD
Grade: ★★★★★

Third time was the charm for ex-Deep Purple frontman Ian Gillan.

His first stab as a soloist bored even Purple fans to tears. Shifting to rock and abbreviating his moniker was an improvement, but it took a third shake-up in the lineup before all the pieces fell into place.

Gillan's *Glory Road* smashed into the U.K. charts in August 1980; their autumn British tour was the stuff of legend. The two-disc *No Easy Way* set brings that legend back to life, capturing Gillan on CD and DVD swaggering across stages on that fateful tour.

Sure, the sound's wonky in places, particularly

on the bonus tracks, but who cares when you're swamped by the "New Wave of Heavy Metal" Gillan sends crashing over you. The setlist was drawn mostly from *Glory*, with a few songs pulled from the earlier lineup's *Mr. Universe*, while "Smoke on the Water" invariably got an airing.

The band, especially guitarist Bernie Torme, was absolutely ferocious; the CD is awesome, but seeing is believing, and the DVD's their crowning glory.

— Jo-Ann Greene

Toto

Falling In Between Live



Eagle Records
(CD: ER 20120-2) CD/DVD
Eagle Rock Entertainment
(DVD: EV 30229-9)

Grade: ★★★★★

Toto guitarist Steve Lukather recently told U.K.-based Web site GetReadyToRock.com that the band has no future plans, and that "we need to put it to rest for an indefinite amount of time" — meaning *Falling In Between Live* could be Toto's last recorded statement.

This show, captured in Paris last year and available on CD and DVD, is another slick, professional concert recording (Toto's third since 1999) that proves the band rocks harder live than it ever did in the studio. Focusing on material from its latest release, 2006's impressive *Falling In Between*, Toto also incorporates many older songs into fresh acoustic and electric medleys, and recently acquired keyboardist Greg Phillinganes adds new vocal

dimensions.

But, of Toto's classic lineup, only Lukather and singer Bobby Kimball appear here (bassist Leland Sklar filled in for injured Mike Porcaro). And after more than 30 years, the wear and tear is starting to show, if only slightly. eaglerock.com

— Michael Popke

10cc

Live And Let Live

7Ts (GLAMCD 55)

Grade: ★★

Look Hear?

7Ts (GLAMCD 53)

Grade: ★★

Sad to say, but these are two of the lesser albums in the hitherto redoubtable 10cc canon.

The first was a double-live package brought out in the wake of *Deceptive Bends* and essentially recreating that album around a handful of hits but already showing just how badly the band miss the errant Godley and Creme. The second was the follow-up to the Graham Gouldman-Eric Stewart duo's last hit record, the "Dreadlock Holiday" inspired *Bloody Tourists*.

And, whereas the live set can at least point to the presence of seven hit singles, a clutch of great rockers, and a masterful Stewart guitar solo through the epic "Feel The Benefit," *Look Hear?* is simply unremarkable soft rock, shot through with just enough facetiousness to remind us that 10cc used to be considered witty.

The fact that Stewart was still recovering from a serious auto accident does offer some extenuating circumstances, of course, and there are a few moments to cherish. "One Two Five" was one of mainstream rock's better pokes at disco culture, with its maddening obsession on how many beats to the minute a song had, and "Don't Send We Back" raises a sympathetic smile. Songwriters the caliber of Stewart and Gouldman do not lose their muse overnight, after all. But if the live album highlighted the best they could muster, albeit with that same metallic edge that the live 10cc always felt the need to splash on, *Look Hear?* is marking time and filling space — and the end of the band was already in sight, it just hadn't noticed it yet.

— Dave Thompson

Bay City Rollers

Elevator

7Ts (GLAMCD 47)

Grade: ★★★★★

Voxx

7Ts (GLAMCD 49)

Grade: ★★★★★

Ricochet

7Ts (GLAMCD 50)

Grade: ★★★★★

Forgotten voices from the end of the universe, the final three Bay City Rollers albums were cut from an almost unrecognizable musical cloth, and so laden down with power-pop jewelry that if they'd only changed their name to Cheap Trick or something, they could have been huge all over again.

Hit-era vocalist Les McKeown was long gone by the time the Rollers cut these discs, but new boy Duncan Faure showed no fear in replacing him, as the band readjusted to life post-fame by unearthing all the musical tricks and twists that had previously been confined to B-sides alone. Across three discs that even the fans had forgotten, all making their CD debuts here, the Rollers step determinedly into their new world, still kicking out the tightly wrought choruses and fist-pumping melodies that made their name in the first half of the decade, but acting their age as well. Stuck for a rhyme, they write a different verse — in the past they'd have simply sung "shimmy shammy shong," stuck for a theme, they follow their hearts, and turn out some surprisingly dramatic concoctions.

The semi-conceptual *Elevator* in particular is stunning, a rumination on the Rollers' founding ambition, compared to the fate they ultimately attained — and how swiftly it all fell away again. *Ricochet* is a sharp-heeled rocker and wraps up with a cover of David Bowie's "Rebel Rebel," to remind us where they came from; and the farewell *Voxx* is the new-wave stomper (the back cover photo dates it dramatically), all sharp edges and edgy shards.

So three Bay City Rollers albums, but don't be fooled by the name. Three great albums.

— Dave Thompson

virgin/RSO Records



▲ Gillan