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[CD Review: Fairport Convention & Matthews Southern Comfort – Live In Maidstone 1970](#)

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by [Simon Barrett](#) in [Music Reviews](#), [Reviews](#)

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The late 60's and early 70's was a fabulous time for music in the the UK. No, I am not talking about the Beatles, I am talking about the birth of Electric Folk. This genre essentially took traditional music, or traditional composing styles and reworked them into a more modern approach. Many bands adopted it, but only three stick in my mind. [Dave Cousins](#) and [Rick Wakeman](#) (yes the same Rick Wakeman that is in YES) were the brains and brawn behind The Strawbs, Steeleye Span boasted Maddy prior and Tim Hart, the third band of note was Fairport Convention. Fairport was maybe the most traditional of the trio, they loved to keep the music in the style that it was originally written.

Fairport has gone through more iterations than a supercomputer, a look at their family tree reads more like a who's who of British folk music than anything else. The early 1970's did have what most people would call the classic line up of Richard Thompson, Simon Nichol, Dave Pegg, Dave Swarbrick, and Dave Mattacks.

This live CD was recorded at a folk festival held in Maidstone, England in 1970. It showcases just how good both Fairport Convention and Matthews Southern Comfort are. Interestingly enough this recording was made only a few months before Matthews Southern Comfort had their smash #1 hit of the Joni Mitchel song Woodstock.

Without doubt this was the golden age of Fairport, they had become a household name after the charting single Si Tu Dois Partir the year before. However it was not so much the music of that single that people remembered but rather the controversy surrounding it. At that time England boasted a total of three TV stations ITV, BBC1, and BBC2. The most popular music show was Top Of The Pops on BBC1, this was a weekly showcase of charting singles, the most popular acts being invited to perform live. What few people realized was that the BBC's definition of live was lip syncing as there was no time available for equipment tear down and set up between acts. Fairport turned up for the show with a t-shirt that read I'm Miming! Needless to say this caused a great deal of grumbling and did result in TOTP changing their format shortly afterwards.

The music chosen was selected by world famous video maker Tony Palmer ([All You Need Is Love](#)) and formed the soundtrack of a documentary about the festival.

Any fan will want this one in their collection.

You can get your copy from our friends at [MVD](#).

Simon Barrett

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