



And then there's the new concert DVD by Scottish fingerstylist John Martyn! (A clumsy transition, I admit, but if you're into acoustic fingerpickers

like the aforementioned, it's a safe bet you'll appreciate this. Besides, it deserves some ink and attention, geography aside.) Martyn is now pushing 60, but the Rockplast concert presented on *The Man Upstairs* (Voiceprint/MVD) – filmed half his life ago, in Germany – is just now seeing the light of day.

Martyn holds the distinction of being the “first solo white act” signed by reggae-based Island Records – for whom he cut his first album, *London Conversation*, in '68. This DVD finds him 10 years down the road in all his quirky glory – alternating goofy stage patter, beer-drinking and swearing with passionate ballads and absolutely jaw-dropping guitar playing. At times, his British folk roots are well in evidence (think John Renbourn, Bert Jansch, Davy Graham); other times he plugs his Martin into his amp and cranks up the delay for spooky percussive effects and screaming leads, similar to Tommy Emmanuel.

The most amazing number, though, is his instrumental “Seven Black Roses.” As he explains, in his coming-up days, “If you couldn't play ‘Angi,’ you weren't anywhere.” To counter that (and secure gigs), he invented “a very visual guitar solo.” Indeed it is, but it's far more than a trick, as he modulates (four times – and retunes) by sliding the capo up in *mid song*, then back down, never dropping a beat or a note. That is, until he intentionally crashes and burns at the very end. Thanks goodness this is finally on DVD. “Must be seen” was never more apt.

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