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Artists unite for 'Live Earth'

By Tom Von Malder (Created: Wednesday, January 16, 2008 10:09 PM EST)

More Toms Picks



Various: Live Earth: The Concerts for a Climate in Crisis (Warner Bros., 2 DVDs, 3 hours 22 min. + CD, 73:32). On July 7, 2007, nine cities on seven continents hosted concerts to raise awareness of an Earth endangered by global warming, to point out what the consumer can do to help and to entertain. This generous set includes two DVDs with 36 performances and a CD. The concert footage puts you right there on stage with the performers and visually is incredibly sharp. The show opens with drummers Roger Taylor of Queen, Chad Smith of Red Hot Chili Peppers and Taylor Hawkins of Foo Fighters joining dozens of other percussionists on stage. It also was a day for reunited bands: Genesis on "Invisible Touch" and The Police on "Driven to Tears." Foo Fighters storm through "Times Like These," John Mayer starts softly on "Gravity" before playing wicked guitar, Roger Waters revisits "Another Brick in the Wall Part 2" with a children's chorus, Linkin Park previews its single "Bleed It Out" and Snow Patrol offers "Shut Your Eyes." There is diversity here. Duran Duran appropriately revisits its "Planet Earth," Metallica storms on "Sad But True," the Beastie Boys offer fun in "Intergalactic" and Paolo Nutini slows things down for "What a Wonderful World." Other performers include David Gray with Damien Rice, Kelly Clarkson, Madonna (all the CD material is repeated in video format except for her "Hey You"; her video is "La Isla Bonita"), Keane, Smashing Pumplkins, Bon Jovi, Crowded House, Keith Urband with Alicia Keys (on the Rolling Stones' "Gimme Shelter") and Lenny Kravitz, among others. Several actors provide introductions and Al Gore speaks twice. Grade A-

John Martyn: Couldn't Love You More (1992, One World CD, 78:07).

This is a reissue of one of two 1990s albums on which famed British folk and rock performer Martyn revisited earlier highlights of his career. The band

















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includes Spencer Cozens, plus guests Phil Collins (vocals on "Sweet Little Mystery" and ""Ways to Cry") and Dave Gilmour (quitar on "Could've Been Me," "One World" and "Ways to Cry"). Musically, the album is very strong. All the aforementioned are highlights, as are the title track, "Lonely Love," the breezy "Over the Hill" with its



Paolo Nutini performs "What a Wonderful World" during the Live Earth concerts last July.

pretty violin, the heartbreaking "Angeline" and the quieter "Fine Lines." The original album has been unavailable for sometime. Bonus tracks are live 1991 recordings of "Couldn't Love You More" and "Never Let Me Go." **Grade A**

John Martyn: Sixty Minutes with John Martyn (Voiceprint CD, 65:33). This is part of Voiceprint's "Sixty Minutes with" series and it only suffers because of so much overlap with the above album. Five tracks are duplicated, but there also are the piano-led "Bless the Weather," the jazzier "Cooltide" (which extends to 12:22), the jaunty "A Little Strange" and some live tracks, including "May You Never." Martyn's career spans more than 37 years. Grade A-

Miles Davis: The Complete On the Corner Sessions (Legacy, 6 CDs, 6 1/2 hours). The 31 recordings here cover 1972 to 1975 and became the 1972 album "On the Corner" and part of the "Big Fun" album. Twelve of the tracks have never before been issued, with five others are issued in their full versions for the first time, making it more than two hours of unreleased music. These unedited masters include "On the Corner" (19:25), "Helen Butte/Mr. Freedom X" (23:19) and "One and One" (17:55). This was a crucial period in the ever-evolving career of Davis, as he immersed himself in the improvisational funk that virtually dominated his music for the rest of his life (Davis lived until 1991; however, he took a six-year hiatus from recording and touring starting in 1975, due to the insufferable pain he still endured from an October 1972 car crash). It was a very experimental fusion, music years ahead of its time, with freestyle funk over a jazz backdrop. Davis was particularly enamored of the music of avant-garde electronic composer Karlheinz Stockhausen (particularly "Gruppen," "Mixtur" and "Hymnen").

The musicians included his working rhythm section of Michael Henderson, Al Foster and Mtume. saxophonists Dave Liebman, Sonny Fortune and Carlos Garnett, keyboardists Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea (Return to Forever), guitarists John McLaughlin, Reggie Lucas and Pete Cosey (co-founder of The Pharaohs and



Phil Collins of the reformed Genesis performs "Invisible Touch" during the Live Earth concerts last July.



Calendar of Events

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Earth, Wind & Fire), drummers Jack DeJohnette and Billy Hart and percussionists Badal Roy and Don Alias.

As Mtume is quoted in the accompanying 120-page hardcover book, Davis' music in "On the Corner" and "Dark Magus" affected "the next generation of artists from Mos Def to Santana to De La Soul. From Annie Lennox to Parliament-Funkadelic. That's what I'm saying. And there is no ruler to measure that inch." The book contains rare photos, a historical essay by journalist-photographer Tom Terrell, a remembrance by British arranger-conductor and cellist Paul Buckmaster (often worked with Elton John; he introduced Davis to Stockhausen's work); and an introduction and an appreciation of Davis' long-time producer Teo Macero by box set co-producer Bob Belden. The set is the eighth and final deluxe metal-spine, multi-CD box set in the Miles Davis Series (said series has won eight Grammy Awards since its launch in 1996). **Grade A+**

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