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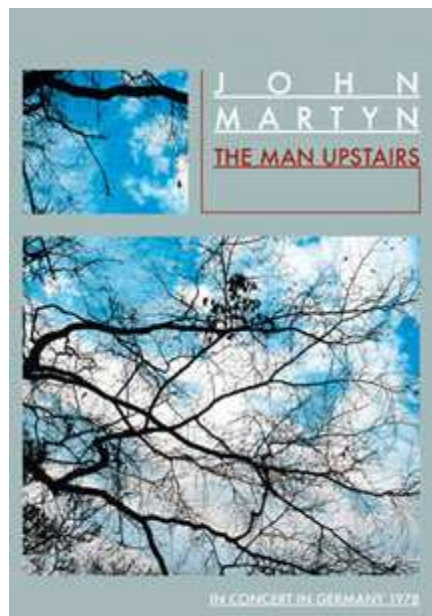
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## [DVD Review: John Martyn - \*The Man Upstairs\*](#)

Posted on March 23rd, 2008

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

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I have to confess that when I saw this DVD in my review 'pile' I could not wait to get it on the player. The first time I saw John Martyn was at the Cambridge Folk Festival circa 1976 (oh I am old!).

John is one of those resourceful musicians that needs nothing more than a stage and an acoustic guitar. To say that he is gifted does not do him justice. Pure folk he is not, and he was one of the first acoustic guitarists to embrace the world of electronica in the form of a Fuzz box.

The Man Upstairs was recorded for German television in 1978 at the Audimax theater in Hamburg and broadcast on the prestigious Rockpalast (Rock Palace) show.

John Martyn puts on a great performance, and one that truly showcases his wide abilities, one moment he is rooted in traditional folk, the next, bluegrass, and before you know it, something wild and wonderful with the 'fuzz box'! Talented does not begin to describe John Martyn, he is a one of

a kind.

With 12 very different songs, there is something for every music lover on this DVD. One of my favorite tracks is 'Big Muff', which John introduces with the politically incorrect "This is Big Muff, co-written by me and a nasty little Negro person". Big Muff is a classic, and in many ways it is John Martyn's calling card.

He may be best known for 'Solid Air', and it is a 'solid' rendition we get. Solid Air could not by any stretch of the imagination be classed as folk, this is blues. And it is damn fine!

It may be 30 years ago that this program was recorded, but it is as fresh as if it was yesterday. I did a quick

'google' on John Martyn and he is still going strong, still gigging, and still entertaining. If you happen to see one of his concerts advertised in your area, go check it out, you will not be disappointed.

You can get your own copy of John Martyn – The Man Upstairs from [MVD](#).

Simon Barrett

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March 2008

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[1](#)

[2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [8](#)

[9](#) [10](#) [11](#) [12](#) [13](#) [14](#) [15](#)

[16](#) [17](#) [18](#) [19](#) [20](#) [21](#) [22](#)

[23](#) [24](#) [25](#) [26](#) [27](#) 28 29

30 31

[« Feb](#)

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- [December 2007](#)
- [November 2007](#)
- [October 2007](#)
- [September 2007](#)
- [August 2007](#)
- [July 2007](#)
- [June 2007](#)
- [May 2007](#)
- [April 2007](#)
- [March 2007](#)

- [February 2007](#)
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- [December 2006](#)
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