



ALBUM REVIEWS BY ALBUMS ON THE HILL

WILCO'S *KICKING TELEVISION - LIVE IN CHICAGO* SUPERB, DESPITE BEING AS FULFILLING AS INTERNET PORN

Wilco

Kicking Television - Live in Chicago
Nonesuch Records

★★★★ out of ★★★★★

It took a while for one of the world's best live bands to release a live CD, but with the mid-November release of Wilco's *Kicking Television - Live in Chicago*, the wait is finally over — and it was certainly worth it.

Kicking Television was recorded in Wilco's home town of Chicago at the Vic Theatre. The two disc set captures perfectly the aura of live Wilco — its melancholy ballads and raucous rock.

2005 has been a very good year for Wilco.

Their 2004 album *A ghost is born* earned the band two Grammy Awards. Two of their earlier albums, 2002's *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot* and 1996's *Being There*, as well as the DVD *I Am Trying to Break Your Heart*, have been certified gold. And it seems as if people finally 'get' them. The international press has heralded Wilco as "the world's most exciting live rock band" that is "capable of almost anything."

In the decade since frontman Jeff Tweedy assembled Wilco out of the ashes of the demise of Uncle Tupelo, the band has released seven albums (including two collaborations with the estate of Woody Guthrie). There has been a well documented departure from one large record company and a well documented arrival at a new one. There have been books, documentaries and the aforementioned Grammys and gold records, not to mention the personnel changes, the drugs, the depression, a near collapse and triumphant rehabilitation.

While Wilco has and always will remain Tweedy's band, the singer said that it is because of the men sharing the stage with him that Wilco is doing so well. "It's really the best it's ever felt," Tweedy told the press earlier this year. "I would say at this point, I don't think I've ever been in a band that felt this connected and unified with the collective vision."

The song selection for *Kicking Television* was taken from their four-night run in Chicago and highlights tracks from nearly the entire Wilco catalog.

It also subtly shows Tweedy's renewed stage presence and damn near giddiness in front of a crowd. Halfway through the first disc he says to the crowd, "Let's get this party started! (laughs) With this mid-tempo rock."

Anyone who has seen Wilco live knows that the

band can turn a corner from countrified rock to over-the-top outlandish super-symphonic sounds in a heartbeat and *Kicking Television* demonstrates this perfectly.

In fact, it does so in the first few tracks on disc one.

After Tweedy and company wrap up a sing-along ending of "Misunderstood" that leaves the audience with "nothing/nothing/nothing/nothing," they launch into "Company In My Back," followed by "The Late Greats." Throughout the relatively mellow "Hell is Chrome," the band begins to hint at the sonic overload to come, before unleashing it with full fervor on "Handshake Drugs" and "I Am Trying To Break Your Heart."

Never one to leave you with only one cathartic release, Wilco builds again near the end of disc two with the sublime and orgasmic "Spiders (Kidsmoke)," before heading into a slightly spacey, but incredibly heart-felt sendoff in the form of a cover of Charlie Wright's "Comment."

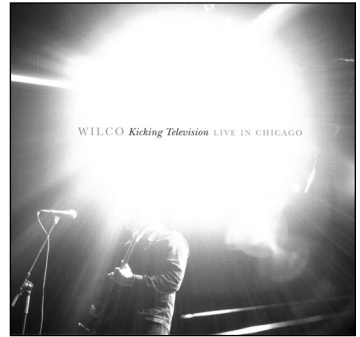
While the disc is superb, there are two areas in which it fails. One is nit-picky, the other it will never overcome.

The nit-picky one is that whoever labeled the masters titled both the first and second disc exactly the same (instead of labeling it 'disc one' and 'disc two'), so when placed on a computer or portable device, the album does not play in order. That leaves the astute listener to either flip through the songs constantly to get the proper order or leaves them feeling a lack of continuity for the building of climaxes for which Wilco is famous. (Listeners can also re-title the album so that it plays in order, so as said before, this is nit-picky).

The larger problem is that this is simply just two plastic discs. This is not live Wilco, it's only a recording of them playing live and thus it's a bit like internet porn. It's o.k. to look at. It'll do the job, but in the end you know it's not real.

Kicking Television will make you want to see Wilco live ... right now ... right in your living room, and unless you have some major, major pull, that's never going to happen.

— Brian F. Johnson





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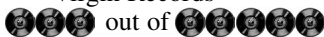
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KRAVITZ'S LIMITED EDITION IS LIMITED IN SCOPE

Lenny Kravitz
Greatest Hits: Limited Tour Edition
Virgin Records



It's a brilliant marketing idea: Take an already successful album, in this case one that has gone eight times platinum, and re-release it with a bit more for the really eager fan, and do it all right before Christmas.

That's exactly what Lenny Kravitz has done here with *Greatest Hits: Limited Tour Edition*.

Featuring 17 songs from Kravitz's vast catalog, plus two new additions that weren't in the original *Greatest Hits* release, Kravitz once again asks his fans if they will go his way.

The special part of this release are the six videos that are packaged on disc two, including "American Woman," "Always on the Run," and "Fly Away."

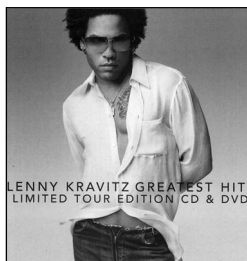
Featuring Kravitz's trademark combination of funk and rock and roll, the four-time Grammy Award

winner, who recently played what is being billed as the longest tour of South America by an international artist ever, goes over his repertoire from "Let Love Rule" to his latest tracks, "Where are we Runnin'?" and "Dig In," on the new release.

It's all well done. There's nothing that can be picked apart about the collection, but ... and you knew a 'but' was coming ... the package seems to be nothing more than a self-serving attempt to garner attention for the current arena tour with Aerosmith, which kicked off in October.

It's also so full of photos of Kravitz that it could double as a wall calendar. Anyone who loves Kravitz's looks as much as his music will be in heaven.

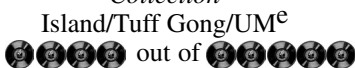
— Forbes Winter



LENNY KRAVITZ GREATEST HITS LIMITED TOUR EDITION CD & DVD

NEW MARLEY COLLECTION FEATURES A 'NEW' TRACK WITH HELP FROM ERIC CLAPTON

Bob Marley
Africa Unite: The Singles
Collection



Bob Marley would have turned 60 this year. Sixty!

Had the King of Reggae lived this long, this album would not be special. But *Africa Unite: The Singles Collection* comes off as one of the best Marley releases in years for one simple fact, it contains a new track.

"Slogans" is the first officially released Marley song in more than a decade. The track, a mellow tune that seemingly simultaneously channels "No Woman, No Cry," "Could You Be Loved" and "Three Little Birds," is believed to have been recorded in a bedroom in Miami in 1979. The tapes were kept at Marley's mother's house, and last year sons Stephen and Ziggy revisited the acoustic demo. They then overdubbed the tracks with other instruments, including guitar by Slowhand himself, Eric Clapton.

Stephen and Ziggy produced the track specifically for this release.

Another "new" recording is a remix of "Africa Unite," which originally appeared on 1979's *Survival*. The track, as presented on this collection, was remixed by will.i.am of the Black Eyed Peas, who was personally invited to create the remix by Marley's wife, Rita.

Famed U.K. producer Ashley Beedle handles another remix on the CD, tackling "Standup Jamrock," a melding of "Get Up, Stand Up" and "Welcome to Jamrock."

The album also features 17 vintage classic tracks spanning Marley's career from his early sides to his Island Record hits. It's a great present to Mr. Marley for his birthday.

— Taylor Johnson



GRATEFUL DEAD REVISIT THE HALLOWED 1969 FILLMORE WEST SHOWS THAT GAVE BIRTH TO LIVE/DEAD

Grateful Dead
Fillmore West 1969
Rhino Records

🎧🎧🎧🎧 out of 🎧🎧🎧🎧🎧

One of the greatest concert albums ever recorded, the Grateful Dead's landmark 1969 *Live/Dead* immortalized the band at its cosmic zenith performing on its home turf in San Francisco.

The only flaw with *Live/Dead* was that it was too short. It failed to capture the complete feel of those shows. But with *Fillmore West 1969*, a three-disc set which includes more than three previously unreleased hours of those performances, some of the very best from the Dead's legendary stand at the fabled Fillmore have been reborn.

Live/Dead was the first successful 16-track live recording in music history, at a time when two track was the standard and eight track was considered state-of-the-art. *Fillmore West 1969* is mixed from those original 16-track master tapes and contains 19 iconic Dead songs presented in pristine HDCD.

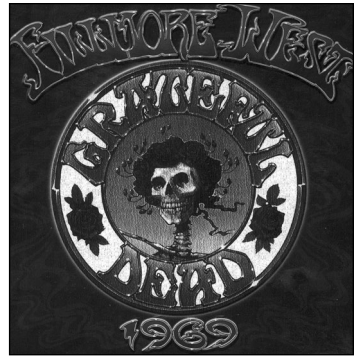
Recorded between February 27 and March 2, 1969, *Fillmore West 1969* distills the essential

moments from all four Fillmore concerts, including masterful moments from Ron "Pigpen" McKernan, during a rare snippet of The Dead's history when Tom Constanten handled the keyboard position.

From "Good Morning Little School Girl" to "We Bid You Goodnight" (yes, the same "We Bid You Goodnight" that was cut short on *Live/Dead*), this glimpse into early-era Dead is right-on.

Never one to go short on packaging, *Fillmore West 1969* includes a 72-page hardbound booklet filled with nearly 100 rare photos and extensive liner notes, including a new essay by longtime Dead publicist and biographer Dennis McNally.

— Brian F. Johnson



JUBAL PLAYS CHAMELEON ON SELF-TITLED RELEASE

Jubal
Jubal
Cuezone Records

🎧🎧🎧 out of 🎧🎧🎧🎧🎧

Holy diversity, Batman.

In the first two tracks of the Nederland-based troubador Jubal's self-titled release from Cuezone Records, Jubal goes from light reggae to classical guitar to happy-hippie Keller Williams-ish folk mixed with hip-hop.

Luckily, it doesn't just stop there. Throughout the album Jubal shifts gears more than a truck driver on a mountain pass. Not only does he shift the gears, he takes on the persona of the genres he tackles. When listening to one of his reggae-based tracks, he *is* a reggae musician. When he takes on the blues, he *is* a bluesman.

Plain and simple, Jubal is Nederland's chameleon and changes his color and form to fit in with a whole host of supporters from Johnny Jyemo to Ben Senterfit and Jarad Astin.

— Alex Samuel



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RING IN
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ERIC MCFADDEN TRIO RE-RELEASES *JOY OF SUFFERING*

Eric McFadden Trio

Joy of Suffering

Terminus Records

★★★★ out of ★★★★★

Like protagonists from some epic western novel, Eric McFadden Trio arrives on the contemporary music scene preceded by anxious rumors and curious anticipation.

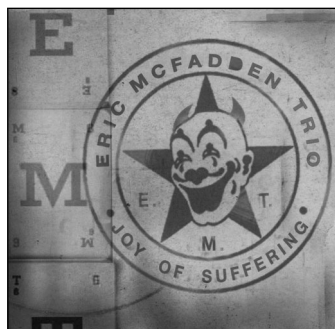
A veteran of celebrated underground bands including Liar, the Eric McFadden Experience, Alien Lovestock and IZM, Eric McFadden's sinister songs, vampiric vocals and flamenco-rock guitar improvisations have made him an icon along America's western seaboard. Lest you dismiss the preceding as absurd hyperbole, consider the fact that McFadden has performed and recorded with the lordly likes of Bo Diddley, the late Joe Strummer, Widespread Panic, psychobilly rockers The Reverend Horton Heat, blues troubadour Keb Mo', Rolling Stone Ron Wood, Primus kahuna Les Claypool and others.

With EMT's re-release of *Joy of Suffering*, McFadden, along with bassist James Whiton and drummer Paulo Baldi, continues down a very dark path of rock and roll without going hardcore.

One reviewer said: "At times, their sound mimics elements of Tom Waits' dreamy, sordid underworld with a harder edge, and at others even

approaches a Motorhead heaviness. The all-acoustic band comes forward as a fully plugged-in Mack truck."

In listening to the CD, it's hard to remember that the band is, in fact, acoustic — which is really the coolest part about EMT. It's hopefully a novelty that will not wear off, and with songs like "Put It Down," "Bury Our Sins" and "Memories Can't Wait," it doesn't appear that will happen anytime soon.



**Eric McFadden Trio :: Trilogy Lounge ::
December 15**

56 HOPE ROAD FAILS TO IMPRESS WITH LIVE CD

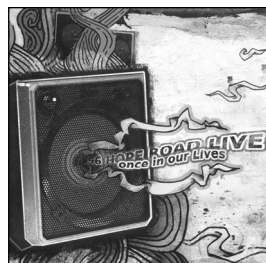
56 Hope Road

Once Isn't Our Lives

Albino Deer Records

★★★ out of ★★★★★

At first cursory listen to 56 Hope Road's new live release *Once In Our Lives*, the band falls flat, with tracks that easily lump the band into the deluge of jam-heavy funky acts and does little to set them apart.



Fortunately, the band rallies heavily, throwing in hip-hop and ska-based beats and comes back to show some true musicianship and some top-notch vocals that help the lackluster start.

However, just like a sports team that starts off soft in a game, sometimes even the best rallies do little to cancel out the early impression.

Recorded live at the incendiary 10,000 Lakes Festival this summer, it's possible that a large problem with the CD could be the mix, which sometimes makes congas or other background instruments overpower the band's lyrical prowess.

The true issue is that the recording does little to capture the band's professionalism that is evident on their 2004 studio release *Drop it All*.

It's great that 56 Hope Road played 10,000 Lakes, but a future live recording, professionally produced, might do more to showcase the band than this release, which comes across as a decent audience recording at best.

— Brian F. Johnson

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29

KISS ROCK THE NATION LIVE A MASTERPIECE FOR THOSE WHO 'GET' THE WORLD'S MOST THEATRICAL BAND

KISS

Rock The Nation Live
Image Entertainment

out of

There are a ton of people — including a self-serving bunch on the new DVD *KISS Rock The Nation Live* — who will tell you that KISS changed their lives.

I am not one of those people.

Quite honestly, I'd like to be. I'd love to be able to say that I 'get it,' but I don't. I never have and I don't think I ever will.

During the past three decades KISS have been the supreme live act, grossing \$300 million in ticket sales in the last four years alone. They have sold more than 80 million records worldwide and were awarded 28 gold and 31 platinum albums.

I completely respect KISS's longevity. I wholeheartedly applaud their numbers (in both record sales and live performance grosses). I admire many of their songs. And I give them credit that they can place such a high level of attention on theatrics in their shows, while still playing some great tunes. But, after three decades, the novelty that once made them such an interesting study has worn off and their present-day performances and

songs seem trite and formulaic.

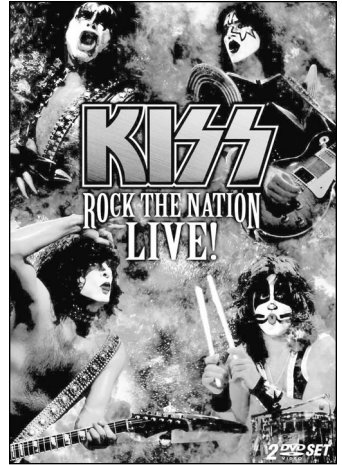
That being said, long-time fans of KISS will love this new DVD, as it follows the band on their 2004 Rock the Nation Tour.

All of the band's hits are there, as are views into the band's soundchecks, photo sessions, life on the road (or in the air, on their KISS jet) and even the infamous dressing room.

One of the cooler features on the DVD is the KISS Power Vision that allows viewers to switch from band member to band member throughout select tracks.

It's a really, really cool DVD, despite showing a frighteningly old-looking Paul Stanley sans make-up — but I, unfortunately, still don't get it.

— Brian F. Johnson



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