



Deborah Bonham VALETTA WATERFRONT LIVE IN CONCERT

Self Released

★★★★★

Spellbinding tracks performed by a band and sung by an artist who know how to turn the quality button up from the very off

Consisting of Peter Bullick on lead guitar, Robbie Blunt on guitar, Ian Rowley on bass, Gerard Louis on piano and organ, Jerry Shirley on drums with Deborah on lead vocals, this quite outstanding gig which was part of the 2008 International Blues & Wine Festival on Malta's Valetta Waterfront harbour to a crowd in excess of 5,000 must have been quite an occasion as the line-up for the festival included none other than Robert Plant. To say those three days were immense must be an understatement.

I found that this DVD does not fall into the trap of adding unnecessary extras before the gig, but instead goes pretty much straight to the gig we all want to see. The short introduction of the journey to the venue is brief but interesting, as you see the beautiful scenery which Malta is associated with along with some of the island's fantastic architecture. Throughout the gig, Deborah doesn't mess around with talking too much and only mentions either a joke or to pay tribute to the loved ones in Deborah's family who sadly are no longer with us. The DVD lasts around an hour, and in that time eleven awesome and stonking tracks find themselves sung with such vigour and excellence that Deborah must surely be playing to venues as large as this on a constant basis.

The most moving song of the lot has to be *Waiting So Long*. Dedicated to both her brothers as well as her Mum who was present in the audience, it keeps up this awesome sound quite delightfully that must have simply impressed even the most placid character. The one track where the band is joined by someone else was on *Devil in New Orleans*. Playing the harmonica, Colin Andrews sublimely helps towards this track as it gets into full swing.

Peter really rocks it up, with Jerry certainly giving it his all by hitting some grand notes. Colin by no means lets down the rest of the group, as he produces some fine notes on harp throughout. Before singing the concluding song *The Old Hyde* Deborah pays tribute to the place which both her brothers built with her Dad which I'm sure left a lump in many of the crowd's throats. An emotional song it may be, it's obvious from the look on Deborah's face whilst she is accompanied by Gerard on organ that after all these years the departure of her family is felt even deeper. With Peter assisting Deborah by adding some stonking picking that really gets the crowd going in this otherwise poignant song, this is a fine way to end the gig.

As well as the gig, there is a DVD Extra of the stage being set along with the band strutting their stuff whilst another track is played over this footage. It acts as a reminder about how much time and energy goes into the setting up of the stage which adds further value for money in this quite brilliant DVD that is certainly worth a look at. **RH**
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The Oak Ridge Boys A GOSPEL JOURNEY: HOSTED BY BILL GAITHER.

Gaither Gospel Series DVD SHDVD4898

★★★★★

One of the most enjoyable musical outpourings I've heard in years!

Recorded in Bill Gaither's studios in Alexandria, Indiana in front of an invited group comprising some of Bill Gaither's close musical friends, the DVD turns out to be a really stunning musical homecoming. For those not familiar with the Oak Ridge Boys, they started out as a southern gospel group but their career really took off in the mid-1970s when eagle-eyed country music promoter Jim Halsey, saw them opening shows for big named country acts and thought they had the potential to make it big in country music. This meant recording mainstream country songs which generated a whole slew of big country hits, but which drew quite