Subject: Yes - Live at Montreux - DVD
Posted by Wayne Parham on Thu, 15 May 2008 05:34:32 GMT
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If you're a Yes fan, this is a must have DVD. It moved me a great deal, more than any other CD or DVD in a long time, years maybe. I'm not exaggerating, it's that good.Maybe part of the reason I was moved so strongly by this performance is my own personal history. Yes was the first band I was really interested in. I grew up with this band. I started listening to them in the mid seventies, when I was just 13 or 14. Probably more than any other single influence, this band is what drove me to try to put together sound systems that were really good, because I wanted to hear perfectly what these guys were playing.I listened to Fragile, Close to the Edge and Relayer so much that I knew each song word for word. I wore out my records and had to buy new ones. That, plus wanting better sound, got me interested in better turntables. The huge dynamic range required better speakers. These guys go from a whisper to 120dB in a measure, so little 6" speakers won't cut it. In fact, most speakers won't.I learned from Yes and grew up with Yes. They went with me to middle school and high school. They went with me to college and on as I started my career. I practiced Yes songs on piano, learned to play as many songs as I could. Their influence drove me to later find Genesis, Gentle Giant, King Crimson, Emerson Lake and Palmer, Todd Rundgren and the Moody Blues, which were other personal favorites I grew up with.Each musician in Yes is incredibly talented, almost like forming a band with Beethoven, Bach, Tchaikovsky, Debussy and Mussorgsky. I heard them in concert three times in the 1970's, and they were as precise on stage as they were in the studio. That's as impressive as anything else, because what they play is hard to play. It is complex music that can't be played by a mediocre talent, or even a good musician that's a little tired or off his groove. Yes music is precise and detailed, a complete workout of mind and body.It was impressive enough to see these guys in their late 20's playing this technical, classical-influenced music that was later to be called art rock. If you were a Yes fan, you probably saw the Yessongs movie in the theater, maybe at a Saturday afternoon matinee. That's how I saw it. The album is great, and the sound quality is good for a early seventies live recording. But the sound quality of the movie isn't very good. So if you bought it on videotape later (or on DVD much later), you bought it just to have a copy of it, to watch but not so much to listen to. It's great to see the band members in their youth, definitely something to see for a Yes fan. But the sound quality is disappointing.Now set the clock forward over 30 years. The teenagers that grew up with Yes have now grown kids of their own. Not only have we grown up, but to be very honest, we've grown old. Don't feel old, but we're way past the point when we would have gone to Carousel on Logan's Run.Most of our favorite bands and rock heroes aren't doing live shows anymore, except the handful of bands held together by talent agencies booking popular 60's and 70's bands in name only, or with one or two original members, sometimes not even the main ones, just replacements. They're often like watching a "Weekend at Bernies" band, a sad hang-on nostalgia that leaves you feeling pretty empty.Then there was this show. Yes at the Montreux Jazz Festival in 2003. All the guys were there. They're showing their age, but after about a minute of the first song, they don't even look their age anymore. They look like energetic but confident 20-somethings, just like they did in Yessongs. Only this is even better, because the sound quality is great. Bam! This one isn't hit out of the park, it's out of the city. I actually think it's a better performance than they did 30+ years ago, with just as much excitement, and even more skill. That's amazing too, because like I said, this stuff is hard to play. It isn't three-chord rock. It's difficult. Very difficult. And these guys don't miss a beat for over two and a quarter hours straight.Incredible.They definitely went out on top.