

The Other Side Of Rick Wakeman [DVD]

Rick Wakeman

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A few years ago, I had the distinct privilege to review Rick Wakeman's *The Legend: Live In Concert 2000*, a DVD that featured the legendary keyboardist playing solo and telling some hilarious stories about his life in music.

This came during a period where we were featuring his music on what I called "Wakeman Wednesdays" -- something we might be revisiting in the near future. (Wakeman even e-mailed me, wondering if I was dedicated or maniacal. Here's the answer, Rick: a little from column "A", a little from column "B").

Now, we're treated to *The Other Side Of Rick Wakeman*, which takes the same format, narrows it down to Wakeman on grand piano (the former featured synthesizers as well) and even dares to get the audience involved in the show.

On paper, it seems like another smash hit. But, kind of like trying to recapture a magical moment, it's not quite as special as the original. (Side note to Ben Williams, Rick's publicist: next time Rick's in Chicago, please let me know. I can't believe I missed him at The Abbey in '06.)

For starters, Wakeman seems tired during this performance. Make no mistake, it doesn't affect his playing, which is as exceptional as it ever has been, but the show overall has the feel like this was recorded at the end of a very long tour. (Some of the stories, to be honest, I've heard the punch lines before. Doesn't make them any less funny, though.)

Second, while Wakeman is still a master storyteller, some of the tales don't quite have the same self-effacing charm as *The Legend* did. A case in point being the "Spur Of The Moment" portion of the show. The tale of "The X Factor" is astounding, but I must have missed the point of having six people in the audience name music notes at random, and Wakeman's working them into the beginning and end of the piece.

The one other point of contention I have with this DVD is in no way Wakeman's fault. I understand that occasionally you'll get a cameraperson in a shot, especially from a distance. But featuring a shot of Wakeman at the piano, only to have a camera cross right in front of him -- to the point you can see the image the cameraperson has on their monitor -- was a poor editing decision.

All of this might make *The Other Side Of Rick Wakeman* seem like a sub-par release. This isn't true at all. Musically, while I'd have liked to have heard a little bit of synthesizer in the mix, the performances by Wakeman are stellar. Even long-time fans of Wakeman, Yes or (to really draw on the memory strings) The Strawbs will be astounded to hear these versions of "And You And I," "A Glimpse Of Heaven" and "The Henry Suite." (The tale Wakeman tells of working with David Bowie, leading into a performance of "Life On Mars?" is also a wonder to behold.)

I said it five years ago, and I'll state again, that Wakeman is such an interesting person with so many wonderful stories to tell that I could sit and listen to him for hours over a pitcher of diet soda. While *The Other Side Of Rick Wakeman* isn't the best solo DVD on the market to illustrate his hilarious genius, it still is worth checking out.

Rating: [B-](#)

User Rating: Not Yet Rated

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