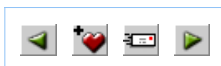


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Starz - Greatest Hits Live

[STARZ](#)

Greatest Hits Live

[\(GB Music/MVD\)](#)

Starz was a band out of time. Though the New Jersey quintet had some success as a live act, none of its four late 70s records sold particularly well. The group, made up of former members of Looking Glass and Stories and fronted by Rex Smith's brother Michael Lee, treaded a fine line between hard rock and power pop that only Cheap Trick was able to walk with success, and its reputation nowadays rests, unfortunately, on being cited as an influence by hair metal acts like Poison, Bon Jovi and Mötley Crüe. Too bad—as this career-spanning live album attests, Starz wasn't a bad band at all. Tunes like "Tear It Down," "Subway Terror" and "Detroit Girls" mix heavy rock riffs, pop hooks and creamy harmonies well, while "Fallen Angel" and "Cherry Baby" head in power pop directions and do it well. Sure, the lyrics can be dumb, but no dumber than usual for the time, and if the stage banter is embarrassingly dated, well, again, it's of its time. As 70s arena rock ear candy goes, Starz may not be as good as Cheap Trick, but its work holds up better than, say, Kiss. The sound of these cuts varies according to source, but the performances and song selection are sharp.

Greatest Hits Live ain't a bad sampler of a band that deserves more respect than its influence indicates.

Michael Toland

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