

Cockburn's *Live* hitless

by Howard Kaman

Bruce Cockburn
Live
True North Records

You've got to give Bruce Cockburn credit. The guy's got a lot of nerve releasing a live album with so few hit songs on it.

I was at the concert recorded for *Live*. Sure enough, he played it all — from "If I Had A Rocket Launcher" to "If A Tree Falls." The concert was a wonderful summary of an illustrious career, complete with lesser known songs like "After The Rain," and the title track from his 1985 album, *World Of Wonders*.

To cap it all off, Cockburn sang

an impromptu rendition of Eric Idle's "Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life," straight out of Monty Python. After a series of deeply searching songs with titles like "Stolen Land," and "Tibetan Side of Town," it was a delicious bit of irony, lightening an evening that easily could have easily been too serious.

On *Live*, he has replicated that concert without many of the hits. The only well known pieces on the fourteen song compilation are "Silver Wheels," "Rumours Of Glory," the obligatory "Wondering Where The Lions Are," and "Call It Democracy." Everything else ranges from the minor hit "See How I Miss You," to "Stolen Land,"

from 1986's *Waiting For A Miracle: The Singles*.

While some listeners may cry for the lack of "Rocket Launcher" and other hits, I applaud Cockburn's decision to release his more obscure work. In fact, "Stolen Land," a track lost amid the hits of *Waiting For A Miracle*, is a highlight when Cockburn strips it to its basics and plays nothing but a goat-skinned bodhran.

Yet, despite this, the record ultimately falls short. Like fellow Canadian musicians Rush, Cockburn has broken his career into sections, punctuating each of them with a live record. Just as Rush used *Exit... Stage Left* and *All The World's A Stage* to repres-



ent their earlier periods, Cockburn had a record called *High Winds, White Sky*. And just as Rush contained the 80s on its *Show of Hands*, Cockburn has released *Live*.

While this may boost sales of Cockburn's recent back catalogue, it presents an inaccurate view of his repertoire. As such, *Live* is best listened to in conjunction with his earlier live set.

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