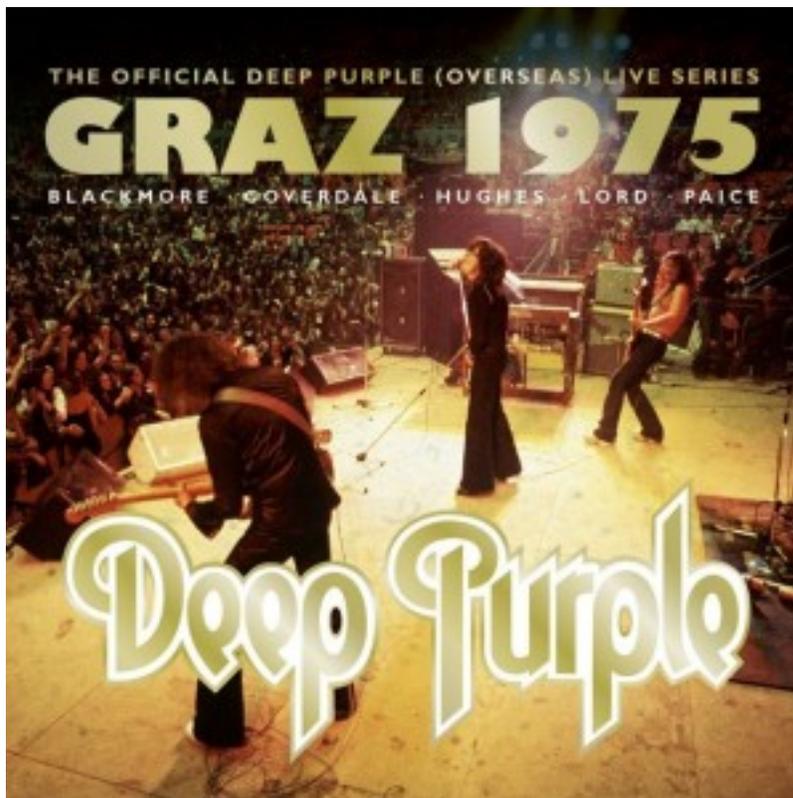


ULTIMATE CLASSIC ROCK

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DEEP PURPLE – ‘GRAZ 1975’ ALBUM REVIEW



Eagle Rock Entertainment/Universal

Recorded live at the Liebenaur ice rink in Graz, Austria, 'Graz 1975' captures the Mark III [Deep Purple](#) lineup in one of its very last performances. However, this is hardly the sound of a band in its final hours.

Instead, it is that of a band charged and ready to take on the world. This show is

often regarded as the “holy grail” of this lineup, and has been frequently traded in bootleg form by fans for years prior to this, its first official release. Several shows on what turned out to be this lineup’s final tour were recorded using the fabled Rolling Stones mobile studio. Shortly after these concerts, guitarist [Ritchie Blackmore](#) would split to form [Rainbow](#), and Purple would bring in [Tommy Bolin](#) to try and keep things rolling. ‘Graz 1975’ is a wall to wall feast, and may be the definitive portrait of this version of the band.

Deep Purple waste no time getting to the point here, kicking things off with the almighty ‘Burn.’ Without question it’s one of the greatest of all the band’s songs, and this version is absolutely captivating. The energy level goes right off the rails once that mighty riff kicks in.

Singer [David Coverdale](#) had clearly settled into his place in the band by this point. While he may never have captured the role with the brilliance that Ian Gillian had, he more than holds his own here. Newer recruit and bassist Glenn Hughes has also found a home here, adding his own personality to the mix both in playing and presentation.

Three tracks from the band’s then-current album ‘Stormbringer’ turn up here — ‘The Gypsy,’ ‘Lady Double Dealer’ and the title cut. All three are high octane stuff, surpassing the studio versions — with ‘Lady Double Dealer’ particularly killing. ‘Mistreated’ from the ‘Burn’ album gets a lengthy workout here, allowing Blackmore to show off with a bluesy but high energy solo. ‘You Fool No One,’ also from ‘Burn,’ maintains that same energy and surge for over 12 minutes. There’s also a rock solid rendition of the all-time classic ‘[Smoke On The Water](#).’ One interesting thing about this version is the vocal harmonies provided by bassist Glenn Hughes during the second verse. His addition here adds a nice change up, taking the song somewhere else entirely.

Now, time to nitpick. Do we really need another 20-minute-plus version of ‘Space Truckin’? Probably not. It’s noodle central for both Lord and Blackmore on this one. Thankfully, Mr. Paice holds down the fort, keeping the whole mess from blowing off into the wind.

That is the one main problem with any live Deep Purple outing, their tendency to go on and on. When they tighten it up, which is actually the case for most of the songs here, they are a force of nature. But when they meander, they get lost. As for the overall performance, it’s pretty damn amazing, and as for the sound quality, it’s all aces. This set was produced by the legendary Martin Birch, the man responsible for countless great hard rock records from [Fleetwood Mac](#) and [Black Sabbath](#) to [Iron Maiden](#) and beyond. His sharp approach on the initial recording, coupled with some tasty remixing and mastering from Martin Pullan shine this monster up just right.

In short, if you love Deep Purple, you will love this album. Even if you’re one of

those who swear only by the Mark II lineup, there is no denying the band's power here. Turn it up loud and let it rock!