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Four overlooked albums of 2011

When you cover entertainment, the music never stops. The albums come in by mail every day but Sunday and pile up in the inbox. And despite good intentions, certain albums get pushed aside, and by the time you've listened, the release date has long since passed.

Most times, you're not missing that much. But every so often, there's an album that makes your heart simultaneously skip and sink upon hearing it — it skips at how amazing the music is, and sinks when you realize that you ignored something so great for so long.

So now, we look back at a few gems — overlooked diamonds left among the zirconia piled about the desk in 2011.

Deep Purple with Orchestra "Live at Montreux 2011" (Eagle Rock): It was 27 years ago that former Deep Purple guitarist Ritchie Blackmore brought a symphony orchestra out on tour with his successor band, Rainbow. Now, the Blackmore-less Deep Purple does likewise.

For the most part, it works well. The strings and brass give new heft to FM staples like "Knocking At Your Back Door" and "Woman From Tokyo."

They also sound fine on my favorite Purple song of all time, "Highway Star," but the track is ruined here by singer Ian Gillian's inability or unwillingness after all these decades to hit the screaming high notes of the chorus, "I LOVE it, I NEED it!" Instead, he opts for a flaccid falsetto that

kills the whole buzz on what is a legendary classic rock anthem.

The orchestra lends a tender, emotional feel to a more obscure track, "When A Blind Man Cries" that shows the full potential of wedding symphonic style to classic rock bombast. Guitarist Steve Morse (previously of Kansas and The Dixie Dregs) brings his own touches and flourishes to songs Blackmore made famous, and deserves kudos for bringing something new to the party.

The concert, from the closing night of the Montreaux festival on July 16, is sold separately as a CD and a DVD.