



Iain Matthews & Julian Dawson "**Songs From The Red Couch**" Sony Records [Austria]

This live recording by two Englishmen, one a long-time expatriate, was captured during a concert in Thalgau, Austria on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1996 at the Freilichtbühne. The duo returned there in November 2002 to play a charity show that helped raise funds for the repair of recent flood damage in the area. Matthews and Dawson opened the show, and this disc, with an acappella rendition of Richard Thompson's "Galway To Graceland" – a tale of *extreme* fan worship and subsequent descent into madness. Back in 1969, when Iain was a member of Fairport Convention, he shared the vocal on Thompson's "Meet On The Ledge" with the late Sandy Denny. Iain takes the lead on the version here. The sixties composed, traditional sounding classic "Darcy Farrow" and Neil Young's "**After The Goldrush**" era song "I Believe In You" amount to the other *cover* songs on this eighteen track album.

During the opening half of the nineteen-nineties Dawson was a member of the revived line-up of Plainsong, a band that Matthews and Andy Roberts founded in 1972. From that aggregation, and the 1993 album "**Dark Side Of The Room**," Dawson performs "Under The Volcano," a song he wrote with Dennis Locorriere [of Doctor Hook & The Medicine Show Band fame], while Iain closes this album with his "Evening Sun" from the same collection. From Plainsong's "**Voices Electric**" [1994] Dawson performs "Gravy Train," and this live album contains six more of Julian's songs that date from the eighties through the mid-nineties. The closing bars of Dawson's "Fragile As China" even reprise a couple of lines from Joni's "Big Yellow Taxi." As for the Iain Matthews compositions featured here, "Southern Wind," "Say A Prayer" and "Keep On Sailing" date from his early solo career days circa 1970/71, while "In London," "The Beat I Walk" were added to his repertoire during the closing decade of last century.

So there you have it - two voices, two acoustic guitars and a harmonica [Dawson's], and a 66 minute live recording – all the cuts are available elsewhere, albeit in alternate versions.

Folkwax Rating 6 out of 10

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