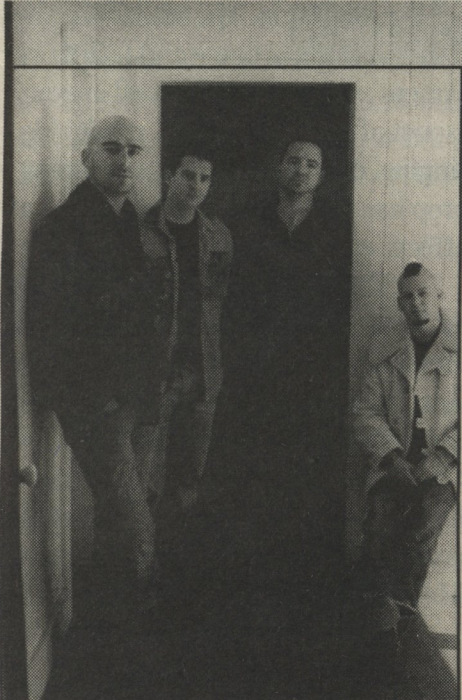


Alive And Awake: The Best Of Live

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Contributor

Alt-rockers *Live* are one of those bands you either like or don't. I've liked them since the first time I



heard "*Lightening Crashes*" all the way back in 1995, yet, just last year, *Blender* magazine called them "one of the worst bands of the last twenty years." (Go figure.) Still, they were one of the headline attractions at *Charlottetown's Festival of Lights* last summer, and for close to two hours the band (consisting of lead singer Ed Kowalczyk, guitarist Chad Taylor, bassist Patrick Dahlheimer and drummer Chad Gracey) put on a wicked show, playing various material from their ten plus year career. Talking to some people after the concert, it seemed hardcore *Live* fans loved it, but the consensus among casual fans was that while the band was 'okay' they didn't know any of the songs except for "*Lightening Crashes*", "*Heaven*" and "*Selling the Drama*". That's too bad,

but what are ya going to do? *Live* hit their peak in popularity in 1996 after "*Lightening Crashes*" and their audience slowly dwindled away; they became like a lot of bands of that period - they get lost in the endless shuffle of other artists. Even so, they've put out some consistently good singles and they are now showcased on "*Alive and Awake: The Best of Live*" - seventeen of their best songs, plus two new ones, "*We Deal In Dreams*" and a cover of Johnny Cash's "*I Walk The Line*". The CD spans the group's entire catalogue from "*Mental Jewelry*" to last year's "*Birds of Pray*". The best material on the CD are from their first three albums, "*Mental Jewelry*" (1991), "*Throwing Copper*" (1995) and "*Secret Samadi*" (1997). Songs like "*The*

Pain Lies on The Riverside", "*Selling the Drama*", "*I Alone*", "*Likini's Juice*", "*All Over You*" and "*Lightening Crashes*" have the band at their most accessible - with great rock songs and sing-along choruses. That's not to say their latter singles aren't as good; songs like "*Dolphin's Cry*" and "*Run To The Water*" are catchy, but their material has become mellow and lacks the raw energy that made the band successful in their younger days. Still, this CD is an excellent representation of how good *Live* could be when they brought their A-game and the new songs "*We Deal In Dreams*" and "*I Walk The Line*" show that the band still has potential to shake things up. If you miss post-grunge rock of the nineties, I'd definitely recommend *The Best of Live*; if you don't, I'd stay away from this one.

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IT'S ALL GOOD.

