

The Band – Jericho (1993)

Written by bluesever

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01-Remedy 02-Blind Willie McTell 03-The Caves Of Jericho 04-Atlantic City 05-Too Soon Gone 06-Country Boy 07-Move To Japan 08-Amazon (River Of Dreams) 09-Stuff You Gotta Watch 10-Same Thing 11-Shine A Light 12-Blues Stay Away From Me The Band: Levon Helm (vocals, drums); Garth Hudson (various instruments, organ, keyboards); Jim Weider (guitar); Richard Bell, Richard Manuel (keyboards); Rick Danko (bass, vocals); Randy Ciarlante (drums).

Few bands called it quits with more fanfare than the Band when they bowed out with the 1976 all-star concert famously preserved in LP and movie form as *The Last Waltz*. However, while guitarist, songwriter, and de facto leader Robbie Robertson may have been ready to retire the Band, it soon became clear that the other members of the group didn't feel the same way (especially Levon Helm and Rick Danko), and by 1982 a Robertson-less lineup had hit the road. While new recordings were planned, it wasn't until 1993, seven years after Richard Manuel was found dead in a Florida motel room, that a new album appeared from the Band, and while *Jericho* lacks the mythic resonance of their greatest work, it did unexpectedly prove that the Band could function very well without Robertson. While Jim Weider isn't as sharp a guitarist as Robertson and his input as a songwriter is also missed, Garth Hudson's epic keyboard arrangements, the lovely ache of Rick Danko's vocals, and especially Levon Helm's raw, soulful singing (as well as his drumming and mandolin work) still define this as the music of the Band. The material lacks the thematic reach of the Band's strongest period, but "The Caves of Jericho" (written by Helm with Richard Bell and John Simon) shows they can come up with worthy songs on their own, and covers of Bob Dylan's "Blind Willie McTell" and Bruce Springsteen's "Atlantic City" are superb choices (especially the latter, with Helm's vocals an unlikely but fine fit). And while the post-Robertson touring version of the Band seemed more interested in boogie than substance, there's no denying good-time numbers like "Remedy," "Stuff You Gotta Watch," and the gloriously weird "Move to Japan" make with the good groove. The addition of an unreleased Richard Manuel performance may seemed a bit ghoulish, but his take on "Country Boy" sounds fine and is a bittersweet tribute to his talents. *Jericho* may pale in comparison to such masterworks as *Music from Big Pink* and *The Band*, but there's little denying it's a stronger and more committed work than *Islands* or the studio side of *The Last*

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Waltz, showing this group still had something to offer besides hippie nostalgia. ---Mark Deming, AllMusic Review

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