

Album of the Month for March 2008
The Cavern - The Most Famous Club In The World
CO29

This 3 CD set celebrates the 50 years of great music emanating from Matthew Street from 1957 - 2007. And given that this year Liverpool has become the European Capital of Culture, I thought it only fitting that this donation from BBC WM should be an Album of the Month.

Do read the comprehensive sleeve notes on the ups and downs of this warehouse basement cellar and the wide variety of music that could be and can still be heard there.

But to be more accurate, there was more than one Cavern. The original closed in 1966, re-opened by the PM, Harold Wilson, closed again in 1973, the warehouse demolished and the cellar was filled with rubble. A "new" Cavern opened across the street and was re-named Eric's. Then, finally, the original Cavern site was reclaimed and an exact replica of the old Club was built in 1984 using 15,000 bricks from the original cellar.

Initially, the Cavern was a jazz club, which then in turn made way for skiffle, which was played, as the sleeve notes say, "on cheap guitars and domestic utensils". This lead very naturally into the distinctive Liverpool style called Merseybeat with the signature act being, of course, **The Beatles**, who played there almost 300 times. In their wake, the Cavern became a prestigious pull for everyone from **The Rolling Stones** to **Queen**.

Eric's saw music from a new breed of Liverpool stars including **Elvis Costello** and **Frankie Goes To Hollywood**.

And now the rebuilt Cavern draws nostalgic visitors and bands as diverse as **Oasis**, **Travis** and **KT Tunstall** through its doors.

But the list of the 50 artists playing on these CDs is breathtaking. Time-wise, it spans 1957 with **Lonnie Donegan** to a live track from the **Arctic Monkeys** in 2006 and in addition to all the home-grown talent from the 60s onwards appearing on it, it also encompasses overseas stars like **Chuck Berry**, **Ben E King** and **Stevie Wonder**.

In fact, hint . . . hint, these CDs could make a really interesting "special" broadcast!!

Enjoy!!

Valda Reid
2 March 2008