

E-Gear

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Music Review: Joan Armatrading: Steppin' Out (Eagle Rock, DVD)

The vaults of legendary German rock show Rockpalast open once again, this time with a rare 1980 concert by husky-voice Brit Joan Armatrading, who got some radio airplay and commanded a cult following in America in the 1970s but was more of a star in Europe, where she remains active. Backed by a hot, propulsive band, driven by Little Feat drummer Richie Hayward, Armatrading is an engaging performer on this DVD--not an onstage dynamo, but a warm, compelling presence who's clearly enjoying herself. Her fans will especially enjoy this DVD, which covers all of the highlights of her heyday, including her biggest hit, "Love and Affection." Filmed for TV, this DVD has a pleasingly full sound and good camera work. Fans of latter-day female singer-songwriters, especially Tracy Chapman, upon whom Armatrading seems to have been a major influence, will especially enjoy this blast from the past.