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INXS Concert Film Further Extends The Band's Legacy And Brand



UNITED KINGDOM - JANUARY 01: WEMBLEY Photo of Michael HUTCHENCE and INXS, Michael Hutchence (Photo by Mick Hutson/Redferns)
REDFERNS

Nearly 22 years after the tragic suicide of their singer Michael Hutchence, the Australian rock band INXS are still in the public eye through a variety of projects that pay homage to their music and unforgettable frontman. Since the 2005 broadcast of the reality TV show *Rock Star: INXS*, the band has released *Original Sin*, a re-recording of their songs featuring guest singers, and several compilation albums and reissues. In 2014, they were depicted in a popular Australian television mini-series, *Never Tear Us Apart* that brought back renewed interest in their music. There are reportedly [more things being planned around INXS's legacy](#), including a theatrical stage show and a museum at the [X Building](#) (described as an arts and innovation hub) in the Australian town of Ballina. Most recently, Hutchence's life is the focus of a new documentary, *Mystify*, directed by Richard Lowenstein.

Another part of the ongoing branding of INXS and their music is the re-release of *Live Baby Live*, a 1991 concert film directed by David Mallett that is being shown in theaters for the very first time (A special sneak-peek screening of the movie, presented by Petrol Records and Eagle Rock Films, was held in New York City this past Thursday). Previously a video release, *Live Baby Live* has been now remastered in 4K accompanied new restored sound by Giles Martin and Sam Okell and presented in Dolby Atmos mix.

Live Baby Live (which takes its name from a lyric on the band's hit song "New Sensation") was filmed during INXS's sold-out performance at London's Wembley Stadium on July 13, 1991, in support of their then-latest album *X*. The band was no stranger to playing Wembley, having opened for Queen five years earlier on the latter's *Magic Tour*. The concert represented INXS – singer Hutchence, keyboardist/guitarist Andrew Farriss, guitarist Tim Farriss, bassist Garry Gary Beers, drummer Jon Farriss, and guitarist/saxophonist Kirk Pengilly – at their height of their popularity, coming off of the massively-successful 1987 album *Kick*.



According to a flyer that was distributed at the recent New York screening, the decision to film the Wembley performance, which drew 72,000 people, came only a few days earlier by INXS's manager Chris Murphy, who proceeded to raise the funds for the project. Director Mallett, who had worked with such top-tier acts as Queen, David Bowie and AC/DC, signed on with a request to shoot the film in 35mm with 16 cameras and a helicopter. In the end, proceeds from the band's fee from the show and PolyGram Video contributed to the financing of the film.

Despite the logistics, it was worth it for posterity reasons, as *Live Baby Live* showed what an amazing live band INXS were, regardless of the size of the venue (they were still kicking it by 1997 for a show at the much-smaller Irving Plaza in New York City, a few months before Hutchene's death). From the opening notes of "Guns in the Sky" that led off the Wembley concert, INXS electrified the massive audience with their superb and skillful musicianship and ruthlessly catchy dance-funk-rock songs. It was a culmination of how much the [band had honed their skills](#) from playing the pubs in Australia since forming in 1977.



A huge part of their [setlist](#) at the Wembley show drew from the albums *Kick* (including “Need You Tonight,” “Devil Inside,” “Never Tear Us Apart” and “New Sensation”) and *X* (“Suicide Blonde,” “The Stairs,” “Disappear” and “Hear That Song”). A few older songs were part of the set as well, including “What You Need,” “Original Sin” and “I Send a Message.” Interestingly, the one number that was not performed at Wembley was “Don’t Change,” a song that was usually a staple at INXS shows. Now with the newly-remastered visuals and sound, this theatrical screening of *Live Baby Live* truly recreated the spectacle-like atmosphere of Wembley from 28 years ago.

There have been plenty of rock and roll concert films from time immemorial. But if there is one only reason to revisit *Live Baby Live* now, it's to see Michael Hutchence at his masterful best with his bluesy and soulful singing and charismatic stage moves. He showed his dark and mysterious shaman-like qualities on the uptempo rockers, but he also displayed a tender side particularly on the ballads “By My Side” and “Never Tear Us Apart.” He seemed to have appreciated and understood the magnitude of playing Wembley when joked to the

audience that this was “the biggest pub we've ever played.” Watching him on screen was also gut-wrenching with the knowledge that he would die of an [apparent suicide](#) six years later. The last shot in the movie featured Hutchence holding up two fingers in a peace sign before leaving the stage—it was an incredibly poignant moment forever frozen on screen.



There hasn't been any official confirmation on whether this newly-remastered version of *Live Baby Live* will see a commercial release. If and when that happens, it will be another further extension of the INXS brand. Hutchence has been gone now for over two decades, and the surviving members of INXS haven't released new original material or toured in quite a while. But with this film and other upcoming endeavors, it doesn't appear to be the last we'll hear from INXS.