



BILL BRUFORD'S EARTHWORKS - A VIDEO ANTHOLOGY: VOLUME 1 - 2000S (DVD)

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When your resume includes such names as Yes, King Crimson and Genesis there should be no doubt as to your status as a world class musician. Bill Bruford has been a force on the progressive rock and jazz scene for 40 years and is about as highly regarded as they come, and Vol. 1 of his VIDEO ANTHOLOGY series will show you exactly why. Filmed from concerts during 2001 in the U.S., 2002 in Argentina and 2005 in Germany, this fantastic DVD features 14 tracks of exquisitely constructed jazz performed by Bruford and several incarnations of his Earthworks band. All three shows are incredible, but I think my favorite has to be the first one on the disc; shot in New York City at the Bottom Line, the performance is sublime, containing some of the most atmospheric and satisfying jazz you're likely to hear from anyone. Lead-off track "Triplicity" will get you into the music straight away, Bruford's drumming complex but always engaging, with Patrick Clahar's gorgeous sax lines soaring over Steve Hamilton's beautiful chord voicings and the warm upright bass technique of Mark Hodgson. "Cloud Cuckoo Land" finds Steve Hamilton playing some positively inspired piano while the band smoothly navigates the intricate arrangement. The following show, filmed at Teatro Opera in Buenos Aires, is no less stunning, this time with Tim Garland taking over on saxophones and bass clarinet. One look at "Tramontana" or "Beelzebub" should be quite enough to make just about anyone into a jazz aficionado while "Youth" and "The Wooden Man Sings, And The Stone Woman Dances" from the final show shot at Drums 'n' Percussion in Paderborn will have even experienced musicians gasping in disbelief at Bruford's tricky time changes, the fleet-fingered playing of electric bassist Laurence Cottle, Tim Garland's hypnotic horn work and pianist Gwiland Simcock's uncanny ability to alternate between subtle and dramatic passages. Caught at the top of their game, this exceptional document of the most recent period in Earthworks history should be required viewing for all fans of jazz, both novice and connoisseur. Highly recommended.

- Neal Woodall (MysticX9@gmail.com)