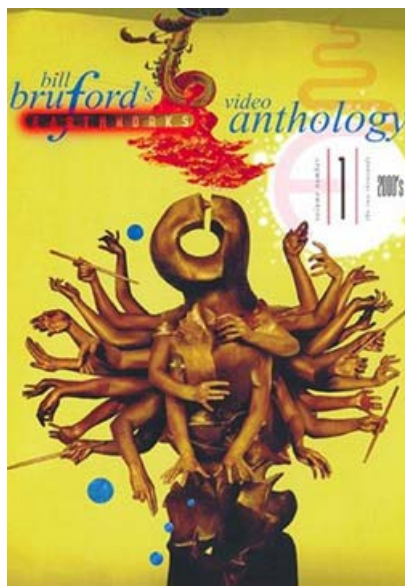




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Bill Bruford's Earthworks – Video Anthology Volume I – 2000's



By Gary Hill

Well, I have to admit, the sequence of these two DVD's seems backwards to me. When I viewed them I did so in chronological order (Volume II is the 1990's). It seemed to make more sense that way, but technically speaking this is the first of the duo of discs. Here we get performances by Bill Bruford's jazz outfit Earthworks recorded in the current millennium. The thing that is so apparent in watching both of these DVD's is that this group might well be the greatest living jazz band out there today. These guys don't get all caught up in the fusion or experimentation (or should I say "noise") for the sake of showing your virtuosity, which can be so common in the world of jazz these days. Bruford's Earthworks seems more intent on creating beautiful and challenging music, more in line with the classic era of jazz. Does that mean that this is strictly retro? – no. There is plenty of new innovation in terms of musical interpretation and technological advancements. It just means that this outfit, like the originators of the musical style which they practice are at least as interested in melody and creating a flowing piece of music as they are in improvisation and experimentation. This works to their advantage in creating a very listenable experience. So, what about the video and audio quality? That is top-notch and is the reason I left it for last in the review. It's so good that it's almost something you just plain don't need to concern yourself with. The final analysis shows this to be a great DVD for fans of Bruford and jazz in general. It just doesn't get a lot better than this band.



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