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Van Der Graaf Generator: Live in Concert at Metropolis Studios, London (CD/DVD)

Live in Concert at Metropolis Studios, London is a 3 disc set (2 CD/1 DVD) of a concert recorded on December 18, 2010 in the middle of a blizzard in West London, where a small group of fans braved the terrible weather to witness prog legends Van Der Graaf Generator make a rare UK live appearance. With a good portion of songs either from their upcoming CD *A Grounding in Numbers*, or their previous releases *Present* and *Trisector*, Peter Hammill, Hugh Banton, and Guy Evans also managed to throw in a few classics to the delight of the small crowd, which, in this small and cozy setting, must have been a real treat.



With VDGG now a trio, the stage was small (and the audience & camera crew practically on top of the musicians!) and featured Hammill and his electric piano on one side, Banton and his organ on the other side, with Evans & his drum kit rear center, and a space out front for Hammill to emerge when he was playing guitar. With the absence now of sax in the band (David Jackson left shortly after the initial reunion), Banton's organ and Hammill's guitar are needed to pick up the slack, and both do a great job here. Though all three musicians look their age, don't let the white, thinning hair fool you, as if you close your eyes, they still sound like vintage VDGG, minus the reeds of course. Hammill's vocals still have plenty of piss & vinegar on the more aggressive passages, and Banton's organ roars and rages along with Evan's nimble drum work. It's interesting to see Hammill out front and center banging away on an array of electric guitars so often; let's face it, he's not the worlds most talented guitar player, but on the more rocking tracks his distorted licks and bluesy solos add just the right amount of menace to go along with his shrieking vocals and Banton's raging keyboard lines. The set list, whether it be older classics or new gems, is very strong,



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with highlights being "Nutter Alert", the chilling "Lemmings", "Lifetime", the brilliant "We Are Not Here" and the mandatory "Man-Erg". Though the band never quite achieved the fame of some of their prog contemporaries like Yes, Genesis, ELP, Pink Floyd, or King Crimson, their music was just as unique and groundbreaking, which you can plainly see and hear throughout this thrilling set.

The camera work and audio throughout is stellar, and you almost feel like you are watching from the front row most of the time. You have to wonder if MVD will decide to release this in Blu-ray at some point, as the picture here, even for DVD, is crystal clear for the most part and you have to think a high-definition transfer would look wonderful. The 2 CDs include the full show seen on the DVD, and there's a nice booklet included in the expanded digipack, which holds all 3 discs in quite nicely. Basically, it's an 'auto-buy' for any VDGG or prog fan.

Track Listing

- 1 Interference Patterns
- 2 Nutter Alert
- 3 Your Time Starts Now
- 4 Lemmings
- 5 Lifetime
- 6 Bunsho
- 7 Childlike Faith
- 8 Mr. Sands
- 9 Over The Hill
- 10 We Are Not Here
- 11 Man-Erg
- 12 Interviews with Peter Hammill, Hugh Banton & Guy Evans

Added: August 14th 2012

Reviewer: Pete Pardo

Score: ★★★★★

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