



## DVD: Einstuerzende Neubauten - Palast der Republik (2006)

**Review Rating:** Very Good

**Label/Studio:** MVD Visual

**Catalog #:** DR-4564

**Region:** 0 (NTSC)

**Released:** March 13, 2007

**Genre:** Concert / Performing Arts

**Synopsis:** Live concert by the experimental group Einstuerzende Neubauten, and the last music performance at Berlin's Palast der Republik.

**Directed by:** (none credited)

**Screenplay by:** n/a

**Music by:** Einstuerzende Neubauten

**Produced by:** (none credited)

**Cast:** Einstuerzende Neubauten

**Film Length:** 82 mins

**Colour:**

**Languages:** Dolby 2.0 German/English, Dolby 5.1 German/English



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### Special Features :

Audio Commentary by Einstuerzende Neubauten / 2 concert encore outtakes: "Redukt" (9:05) + "Die Befindlichkeit des Landes" (5:26) / Promo trailer (:55)

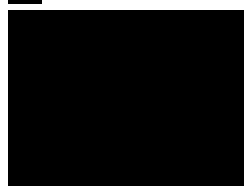
### Comments :

The latest DVD by the group Einstuerzende Neubauten captures their 2004 appearance at what was left of the Palast der Republik, East Germany's former parliament building and concert hall, before it was ordered torn down in 2006.

Everything about the concert is symbolic of East and West Germany's collective past and the present, but oddly not Germany's future. Some of the group's songs are overtly potent in symbolism and metaphors, and are tied to the Communist regime that ruled the GDR (German Democratic Republic) until the Berlin Wall was torn down in 1989.

The building, stripped to its raw steel girders, is a skeleton of the past, and the group's own warm analogue-sounding instruments - including a toy designed by Robert Moog that's used by the bassist in the opening of "Weilweilweil" - are enhanced by a suitable collection of actual industrial components.

There's a spinning turbine, a radio, steel plates, a long coil, compressed air blown onto plastic vessels placed on a spinning turntable, and tethered olive oil cans dragged through the Palast, past curious audience members and perplexed security guards. A kind of intermission also has the group drumming on the metal railings above the audience, and a chorus of 100 fans joins the group in a few songs, with scripted and somewhat improvised words.



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On a cursory level, this all makes one think of a pretentious performance troupe, some of whom eschew the use of shoes, so their bare feet can draw some of the natural energy from the stage (which they kind of do), but there's much more to Einstuerzende Neubauten.

Bassist Alex Hacke performs his richly analogue notes like a seventies rock star, giving the DVD's 5.1 mix a really punchy subwoofer kick; Blixa Bargeld's vocal style kind of shifts between cabaret and free-verse poetry, using a crisp, assured delivery that's never smothered by the other instruments; and percussionist Rudolf Moser uses specially miked plastic tubing to create analogue instruments that perfectly mimic vintage eighties percussion sequencers – a very clever feat.

The group has been around since the [early eighties](#), but their sound is a great fusion of prog rock, industrial, bits of eighties new wave, and performance art, and when the four percussionists fiddle with extravagant meters and rhythmic textures, you can also hear evocations of Christopher Franke's often maniacal synth textures that goosed some of Tangerine Dream's best film scores, like **The Park Is Mine**, into hypnotic percussion showcases. "Dead Friends (Around the Corner)" is a colourful example of Moser's ingenuity, where he drums a tire and steel plate to create sounds for which the Dream required banks of electronic gear.

Part of the group's instruments have inherent show value, but they're pretty much integral to the evening's ballads, odes, and improvised works.

A big plus for fans and newcomers is a commentary track featuring most of the band, who maintain a spotty but fun discussion of the event, specifics of each song, and original album counterparts. A few songs are performed in part or whole in English (including "Sabrina," a song originally written for but not used in Leander Haussmann's 1999 film **Sonnenallee / Sun Alley**), but most of the material uses German, so it's a treat to hear some needed explanations.













Those fluent in German (or even with a working German knowledge) will have an edge over allophones, however, because the conversations frequently dip into or flip between both languages, much in the way cross-cultural dinner chatter would shift when one language offers more expressive adjectives and metaphors. (The concert's more dynamic audio levels sometimes obfuscate moments in the commentary track, but each of the participants are cleanly miked.)

Also included on the DVD are two deleted encore performances that vary in visual and aural quality, but preserve the encore performances snipped from the final film edit. There's also a short trailer, which has Bargeld abruptly describing the Palast der Republik – a building that one wishes might have showcased in its own special featurette.

(People curious about the building's history can try a [Google search](#), or check out [Wikipedia's](#) tight historical tally, watch [Ole Tangen Jr's great little documentary](#) on the building's final days before condemnation, and see [a doc by PBS correspondent Jason Springarm-Koff](#) that covers the parliament debates which preceded the final vote to begin dismantling the massive structure.)

Not for all tastes, but very rewarding for those seeking a visual performance style that makes even the watcher at home feel like they're participating in a unique, once-only cultural event.

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