

Michael Schenker Group 30th Anniversary Concert — Live In Tokyo

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By Keith Carman

Michael Schenker is one of those behind-the-scenes kinds of guys. While many know his name, more don't. Very few realize the important role he has played in the formation and stylization of hard music. From early years with U.F.O. and Scorpions through to Michael Schenker Group (MSG) and the ensuing throngs of youth striving to ape his guitar squeals and searing hot solos, his sound is stamped across the face of progressively influenced heaviness. Recorded on the inaugural date of the group's hallmark celebration tour this past January, *Live In Tokyo* may sound like little more than self-gratification but as the almost two-hour gig progresses, an air of gracious respect for both man and music flourishes, forcing us to realize his prominence in the genre. To that extent, while Schenker did gather up much of the original band for these dates, it's somewhat unimportant. Yes, the band are tight and songs such as "Armed And Ready," "Victim Of Illusion" and "Doctor, Doctor" prove their timelessness in the world of gritty rock. However, it's the unflinching prowess and virtual perfection of Schenker's performance that is of primary interest; he's spot-on for the gig's duration. Bonus material in an L.A. rehearsal session and the obligatory dude walking around with a camera backstage might be a little less inspired than we'd hope for though. Still, it's certainly no detriment because overall, MSG may look old and not move around as much as they once did but by concert's end, we realize just how important it is that they celebrate three decades of dense riffs and sharp hooks. They're really that good. (Inakustik)

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