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## The 30th Anniversary Concert Live In Tokyo Michael Schenker Group



It's hard to get too excited about everything Michael Schenker has done since he foolishly abandoned UFO in the late 70s. Really...how could he expect to possibly top **Phenomenon**, **Force It** or the classic live album **Strangers In The Night**? Undeterred with multiple misfortunes, Schenker has spent the better part of the last 30 years trying to convince everyone that his own band, the Michael Schenker Group, is just as valid. And while that remains debatable, **The 30th Anniversary Concert - Live In Tokyo** DVD captures the classic Michael Schenker Group giving all comers a raging run for their money.

One thing is for sure: Schenker handles a Flying-V like no other. Apparently off the sauce and his ego in check, the guitarist can still spawn licks and sustain notes that'll curl your spine. That unique, snarling tone gives rise to prescient melodies and rhythms that help bring out the best in the other players as well. For this round, he's brought in some heavy hitters, including original MSG singer Gary Barden, veteran bassist Neil Murray, powerhouse drummer Simon Phillips and keyboardist and guitarist Wayne Findley.

Together, the band pounds out a stringent set, highlighted with tracks like "Feels Like A Good Thing" and "Armed And Ready," arguably two of the guitarist's best riff rockers outside of UFO or the Scorpions. There are plenty others too. "Cry For The Nations" and "Are You Ready To Rock" successfully stir up the Tokyo audience, while "Into the Arena" proves the perfect showcase for the guitarist's obstinate style.

Meanwhile, the tender notes that grace the opening bars of "On And On" demonstrate the band's ability to melodically alter the mood without softening the attack. But it's the inevitable UFO tunes, "Rock Bottom" and "Doctor Doctor," that lend credence to the argument that Schenker would likely risen to the ranks of Blackmore and Van Halen had he just kept his head down and played out the UFO card to its full potential. And who knows what could have happened in Tokyo if he had dug deeper into the UFO grab bag? Then again, one might be wondering why he steered clear of anything he did with Robin McAuley. That may well be an anniversary show for another time.

~ Shawn Perry





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