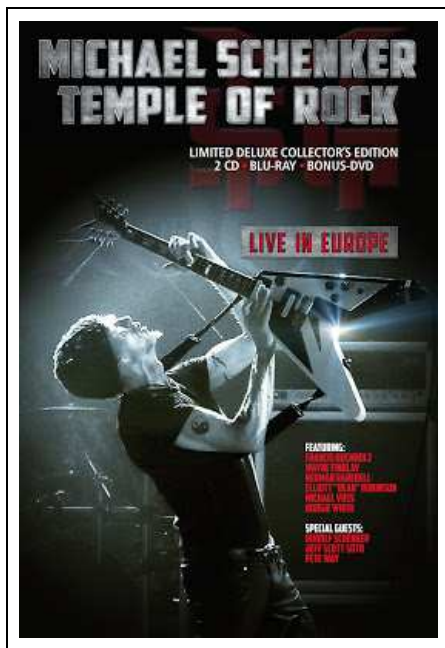


# Rock Guitar Daily with Tony Conley

What's Great In The World Of Rock And Roll Guitar

Thursday, December 6, 2012

## Michael Schenker Temple Of Rock - Live In Europe: Making The Case



Michael Schenker's *Temple Of Rock - Live In Europe* is the best live recording the German axe master has gifted the world with in almost 30 years. If the world needs any more convincing that Schenker is at the top of his game, look no further than Live In Europe.

The DVD contains the complete show shot in Tilberg, Netherlands in May of 2012, and five bonus tracks from the High Voltage Festival in July of 2011. Veteran belter Doogie White handles the vocal chores in Tilberg and producer Michael Voss sings the HV cuts, however make no mistake - there are other players on the stage, but it's Schenker who commands the focus.

From the minute William Shatner finishes his recorded intro, Schenker owns the next two hours. He takes his audience on a dazzling trip through his musical history -

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he mixes in relatively equal doses of his days in UFO, his brief but brilliant stint in his brother's Scorpions, and plenty of gold is imported from his own juggernaut, Michael Schenker Group. I've had the pleasure of standing on the stage as Michael played on many occasions, and I can honestly say, he's playing as well as ever. He seems more willing to take chances with some wicked improvisations - several new twists and turns during **Rock Bottom** made me laugh out loud - but more than that, he finally seems comfortable in his own skin onstage. He smiles, laughs, and throws shapes left and right as he commands his turf.



Photo by Stephen Fourie

To go through the set list may be a bit superfluous at this point. It reads like any other MSG live set for the last few decades, but I must say that it sounds great with Herman Rarebell mashing the tubs - there is something about his playing which meshes really well with Michael's

style. Doogie White does a fine job of covering a terribly varied and difficult range of vocalists and their styles. As admirably as he tries, I'd do well to never hear anyone tackle **Assault Attack** again - Graham Bonnet set the bar too high on this one, and I doubt if even he could have tackled it well on stage. That being said, White does a great job here. He's at his best when his brogue is on tap, and he can roll a few r's. I look forward to hearing what he can do over a whole album with Herr Schenker, and the ex-Scorpions. Should be a blinder.

Some highlights of the DVD are, of course, **Rock Bottom**, which still may be one of rock's most unique riffs ever, and Michael manages to play it with a sense of freshness, as he also does with **Let It Roll** - his achingly beautiful interludes always mesh so fluidly with the rocket fueled main riffs. The signature instrumentals **Into The Arena** and **Coast To Coast** will have you on the edge of your seat as the maestro catches every note and squeezes in a few new ones. Michael Voss does a great job of mixing Schenker's guitar loudly enough so it's never an effort to be found - and that's how we want it here.



The concert at Tilberg is shot from a variety of angles and cameras, and they've done a fantastic job of retaining the excitement of a live gig. You never get bored, and the edits keep things moving. The best part is that there are almost endless shots of Michael Schenker playing brilliant guitar, and that is why this DVD exists.

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Glenn Hughes and myself having a chat.

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I'm guessing that this performance will be a turning point of sorts. Michael Schenker has proven over the last several years that he's left behind the parts of his development that may have been less productive, and he has redeemed himself musically and responsibly. I



believe the time is now for him to return to a higher plateau in the world of rock. He mentioned this week that he wouldn't mind doing a blues rock record with David Coverdale. I hope that someone is listening, and at least pitches this idea to the King 'Snake. I love and respect the musicians Michael has been working with, but it is time for Schenker to make some great new music, and I am of the opinion that he hasn't made a truly great record in decades. This will require that he partner up with some folks who are in the same league - if this offends some, I apologize, but with Mogg, Meine, and Bonnet, Michael made a catalog that is still selling out around the world, yet there has been little since (actually, I also loved McAuley/Schenker). What better way to top off a long and glorious career than to make some great records, and truly go out as a champion.



In the meantime, you're going to want this collection. It's a great document of this point in Michael's life and career - it's a great time. He's smiling, he's happy, and he's playing the kind of guitar that got us all here. We love Michael Schenker because he is an astounding musician, and a most interesting man. I've been riding with this rodeo for 35 years, and I am thrilled to see this great exhibit of guitar wizardry.

As you may know, I just reviewed ex-MSG, current UFO member Paul Raymond's new solo album, *Terms & Conditions Apply*, and I called it the best set of original music to come out of the UFO camp in twenty years. I fully expect both Schenker and UFO to give Mr. Raymond a run for his money in this next year - hopefully, in the

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process, they rub shoulders. As a fan, I dream of it, as a critic, I long for it, as a friend, I hope for it.

As a huge fan and old friend, it's beautiful to see my old boss riding so high.

Michael Schenker *Temple Of Rock - Live In Europe* is one that you will want to own, to sit down with, and be amazed by - I was.

Posted by Tony Conley at 3:44 PM 

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