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MICHAEL SCHENKER - TEMPLE OF ROCK, LIVE IN EUROPE

STAFF RATING: **3.75 / 5**
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Matti Frost (150 reviews)
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It must be the season for live albums, because I've been getting a lot of them. Seems that bands that have been around for a while like to dish one out now and again, and it always helps when the band doing the dishing is one known for their live performances. Michael Schenker has been around as long as I've been alive. The former Scorpions/UFO guitarist and long-time leader of his eponymous Michael Schenker Group has been playing and touring since the early 1970's.

While he may have faded from mainstream rock/metal popularity in the United States in the 1980's with the advent of hair metal and harder-edged thrash, he maintained a steady cult of die-hard guitar rock fans, and his popularity never really waned worldwide, especially in Europe. This continuous pace of activity has sharpened him into someone capable of firing off a live album and making it look and sound easy.

Temple of Rock is a career-spanning 2-CD set (also available on DVD) which was recorded last year in The Netherlands, and the UK, respectively. The two concerts feature many special guests, among them, his brother Rudolph from Scorpions, Pete Way, and Jeff Scott Soto, whose voice has fronted some pretty iconic bands.

I can't say this is really in my wheelhouse, it's just not something I would listen to very often, but that doesn't mean it's bad. Far from it, this live album shows just what longevity can really do, and it clearly has an audience. Live albums are pretty much marketed towards the die-hard fans anyway, so if one is inclined to check this out, you're probably a fan of Schenker's to begin with.

Excellent performed and recorded, *Temple of Rock* is a must-have for anyone who is into the style of turn-of-the-80's German metal. The songs are crafted brilliantly to combine the best of American and British classic rock with just enough neo-classical metal edge to make them a bit more heavy. Fans of modern bands that are looking back to this time for influence, take note- sometimes, going to the source is better than a younger, more hip facsimile. It won't score you scene points to be seen with a Michael Schenker t-shirt on, but at least you will know where the sound and style comes from.

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