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Billy Cobham's Culturemix – Paris Concert At New Morning

Picture: B- Sound: B- Extras: C-
Concert: B



Billy Cobham is a very important and influential drummer. The DVD case points to how relevant his work in adding Jazz-Rock and Fusion into drumming and music in general is, but his early work in electronic music in general over 30 years ago turned out to be vital in ways even he did not know at the time. Taped in September 2002, **Billy Cobham's Culturemix – Paris Concert At New Morning** is a terrific show running nearly two hours that shows how this early work weaves its way through some exceptionally strong instrumental material as follows:

- 1) *Blue Line*
- 2) *Five Day Run*
- 3) *Sa Pobla*
- 4) *Dreamer*
- 5) *Aurora Borealis*
- 6) *Mister B.C.*
- 7) *Clairvoyance*
- 8) *Stratus*
- 9) *Dissicated Coconuts*
- 10) *Crosswinds*
- 11) *How Was The Night*
- 12) *Spectrum*

As I listened, I was reminded of the cleverness of Chic, Steely Dan and Progressive Rock bands of the 1970s like Yes, while also considering the fun and innovations of Frank Zappa. There is a real joy to the performance here by Cobham and his band, in great form. The Jazz never gets boring and is some of the best you will hear on DVD to date. Along with Gil Mellé's input in inventing the drum machine, on one has had more influence technically than Cobham as a known performer in the advancement of percussion. Fortunately, this great concert does not disappoint; the kind of music you would expect from such an influential innovator.

The letterboxed 1.78 X 1 image is not anamorphically enhanced, but is a tad clearer than usual despite that limit. The Dolby Digital 5.1 sound is not bad, though one wished it were DTS because this is a fine recording. Some of what is missing on that mix can be found in the 16Bit/48kHz PCM 2.0 Stereo tracks, which also reveal what a good recording this is. Maybe a Multi-Channel SACD would be in order. The only extra is Soundcheck Sketches running over 7 minutes and will be of particular interest to musicians. Too bad there are not more extras for such a key performer on this disc, but the concert is great enough on its own to recommend this disc.

MARKET PLACE

- Nicholas Sheffo

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