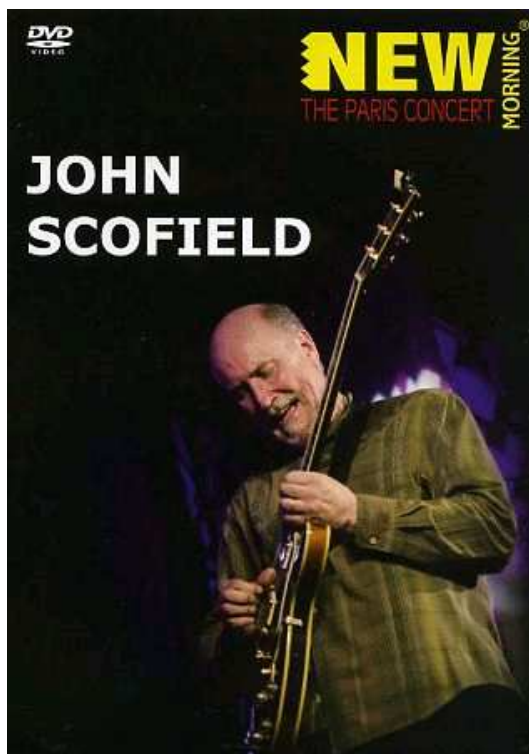


FAME Review: John Scofield - New Morning: The Paris Concert (DVD)



New Morning: The Paris Concert

[John Scofield](#)

Inakustik - INAK 6478-1DVD

Available from [MVD Entertainment Group](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange
by **Mark S. Tucker**
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Though he's inarguably a man who can claim the title of 'maestro' on the guitar, John Scofield is difficult to place into any category. Like Jim Hall, he cleaves tightly to trad jazz precepts and practices, yet infiltrates so many modern phases into his work. This may perhaps be the single most identifying trait for the man as a six-string vocabularist. *New Morning* catches him, then, in a quartet setting where he, thank God!, chose piano over sax as second voice, thereby preserving his dominant voicing properly. Sax tends to drown everything because, to paraphrase Jessica Rabbit, it can't help it, it was created that way (I love a good sax, especially in Jan Garbarek's hands, but, man, what problems the instrument can pose!). And Scofield keeps the environment level as each of these top-notch sidemen takes a solo.

New Morning is a glorious 135 minutes long, not just a snapshot of the guitarist as he ages beautifully into his statements but an immersion in the creation of sonic art by way of constantly shifting intelligence. As John runs through his work, you hear Holdsworth slurs, Martino bop lines, Metheny sliding runs, Coryell dissonances, and an abundance of his own tricks, treats, and perfections. *Woody 'N You* is a particularly intense evocation of how Scofield can jump into a steamroller, switching into high gear with nary an extra breath taken. Then watch what he does half way through *Slinky* and again later on in noisier, even psychedelic, aspects as the cavalcade proceeds. Though the setting is Paris, this is a performance worthy of Montreux.

Keyboardist Mike Eckroth plays a great funky organ as well as piano, but in that elder instrument mirrors much of the guitarist's wont via boppy straight-ahead solos, often supplying ideas for Scofield to bounce off of. Bassist Ben Street is strong, clear, and effusive (watch his hands during *Steeplechase*—yow!) beside drummer Bill Stewart who pushes jaw-dropping colorations out of a smallish kit, unafraid to fully implement every aspect of the set-up as far as it will go without overpowering anything, restraint without losing an iota of the conversation. Scofield supplies extremely satisfying long spaces of improv but also gives full rein to the rest of the ensemble, keeping the aforementioned balance exquisitely maintained. The spotlight is indeed on him, yet he very readily nudges it over to the rest of the lads as well.

Each song here is an interpretation, a long extrapolation of every composition's hidden potential reaching to explore the extent of expression once tapped. Even the balladic *My Foolish Heart* undergoes a transmutation lowering it into a more contemplative mode with incisive ornamentation, sparsely laid but thought-provoking. And so the entire concert goes, packed with endless fresh perspectives and unerring judgements, a wonderland of eight hands coalescing into one multi-variate mind forever searching for a perfect fusion of old and new. This DVD is issued in Inakustik's *Sons of Miles* series and proudly carries forward the groundbreaking that Mrs. Davis' famous son began well before, then with *In a Silent Way*, and after.

Track List:

- Ten Taken
- Woody 'N You
- Slinky
- My Foolish Heart
- Steeplechase
- Hive
- Lost, Found, & Inbetween
- Chirikawa
- Relaxin' at Camarillo
- I Want to Talk about You
- Groove Elation
- The Guinness Spot

No song credits given, and I'm too damn lazy right now to hunt them down. Sorry!

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