

Music DVD Review: John Scofield - *New Morning: The Paris Concert*

John Scofield has been one of the most important and influential jazz guitarists and composers in the world since he first arrived on the scene back in the mid '70s. He has played and collaborated with such jazz legends as George Duke, Charles Mingus, Jaco Pastorius, and Miles Davis, and has gone on to release over 30 albums under his own name since releasing his self-titled debut in 1977.

Admittedly, the type of traditional jazz that Scofield plays has never really been my thing. Whenever I need the occasional jazz guitar fix, I will usually turn to jazz fusion guys like Al DiMeola, Robben Ford, Larry Carlton, Frank Gambale, or Mike Stern, who tend to fuse more rock and blues into the mix. Listening to instrumental jazz guitar can be about as easy as listening to speed metal. It's typically not something you're going to play in the background as you are cooking the evening meal, like you might do with a smooth jazz album from Lee Ritenour. This style really requires your focus and attention to truly reap the full benefits. I nearly broke out in a sweat halfway through the first track on this DVD.

New Morning: The Paris Concert was filmed in high definition at the New Morning club in Paris, France on April 23rd, 2010. The DVD immediately dives into the performance just as Scofield is plucking the first few notes of the opening track, "Ten Taken." Being more accustomed to rock and blues, I often found myself thinking that Scofield was hitting a lot of wrong notes, which is obviously not the case, but since jazz guitarists rarely stay within the bounds of the common pentatonic and blues scales that our ears are more accustomed to hearing, it can take your brain some time to wrap around these strange notes it is hearing.

Now although this music may not be my main cup of tea, it was very easy to appreciate the masterful instrumental performances on this DVD. Scofield is a jazz guitar virtuoso, and he has surrounded himself with three equally adept musicians for this concert; Bill Stewart (drums), Ben Street (upright acoustic bass), and Michael Eckroth (piano, and occasional organ), and this quartet simply takes you to jazz school for about two hours. Scofield turns several old jazz classics like Dizzy Gillespie's "Woody 'N You," and Charlie Parker's "Relaxin' at Camarillo" into his very own jazz guitar symphonies, while also mixing in a few of his own classics like more modern paced "Groove Elation," from his 1995 album of the same name.

The overall production quality of this DVD is superb. Although the high-def picture is not exactly reference quality, there is little to complain about. Your choice of DTS and Dolby Digital 5.1 surround, and PCM stereo audio tracks are offered, and they each sounded nearly flawless. Accurate sound reproduction is especially important with an intimate jazz performance, and this DVD certainly

delivers. The only special feature is an 8-minute, behind-the-scenes, feature titled "Soundcheck Sketches."

If you are already a fan of John Scofield or instrumental jazz guitar music in general, then this DVD is a must have for your collection. For the jazz novice, this is certainly an excellent choice to get your feet wet.

Track List:

01. Ten Taken
02. Woody 'N You
03. Slinky
04. My Foolish Heart
05. Steeplechase
06. Hive
07. Lost Found & Inbetween
08. Chirikawa
09. Relaxin' at Camarillo
10. I Want To Talk To You
11. Groove Elation
12. The Guinness Spot

Ratings:

Performance - 8/10

Production - 9/10

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