

John Hammond - Paris Concert / 2006 MVD / 126 Minutes /
<http://www.mvdb2b.com> / Reviewed 07 August 2006

John Hammond is another of those jazz people that I had no clue about before turning on eir "Paris Concert". After the concert was done, I was completely in eir corner. The performance was covered well; four cameras were able to pick up this 2004 show. And hell, even the bonus content on this DVD was something to watch. The bonus content includes an interview with Hammond that really contextualizes the concert for the fans. Where it is important to have a musician on top of eir game for these DVDs and a solid method of capturing eir performance, something that often gets overlooked on these DVDs has to be the venue in which these concerts take place. The "Paris Concert" set of DVDs has this venue problem taken care of; the "New Morning" is a perfect venue, set in Paris, for any jazz musician.

There is an intimacy present throughout the entirety of this concert that highlights the compositions of Hammond.. Jazz is not a genre of music that lends itself much to the wide-open arenas present in major metropolises. To put the concert in the New Morning is an inspired idea, both for the bookers of the club as well as Hammond and MVD themselves. The recorded sound of the songs on "Paris Concert" is easily the equivalent of a studio album. The audience weighing in at points during the track is pretty much the only thing that will remind listeners that this concert is live instead of canned. The only thing that I could conceivably think would be good changed is the light level. This problem may just be mine, but the concert videos are usually a hair too dark. This is due to the fact that bands like having the lights low, but I'd rather just see them in all of their glory.

The four cameras do a lot to alleviate this problem, but the darkness may still be a problem to some. The two hours of material are something that could be played again and again. The fact that the concert takes up most of that time allows individuals to put the disc on and just use it for its audio; one can clean or just groove along with Hammond for the entire concert time and time again. I would like to see more in the way of DVDs come out of the New Morning; the atmosphere is perfect, the fans are supportive and add a lot to the performances, and the concerts set here are imbued with a special energy. I would like to hear more from Hammond now, and this DVD works as a perfect jumping off point for anyone who digs the music put out by Hammond and all of eir regulars. Pick this DVD up if you have any love for Jazz or music done well. Hammond knows what ey is doing with this concert and will show viewers the ropes for nearly two hours. Well worth the cost.

Rating: 6.5/10

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