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Al Di Meola - *One Of These Nights*

Released: 2004

Label: Inakustik / Music Video Distributors

Cat. No.: INAK 7001 DVD

Total Time: 116:00

Reviewed by: Stephanie Sollow, April 2005

One Of These Nights is an excellent DVD, documenting an excellent performance by one of jazz', and jazz guitar's, notable virtuosos - Al Di Meola. And that reputation is well deserved as this DVD ably demonstrates. The selection of pieces, most of them Di Meola compositions – the other two are Astor Piazzolla pieces – range in mood and tone from elegant and fragile to fiery and muscular, and places in between. Di Meola and percussionist (mainly congas) Gumbi Ortiz play a challenging duet towards the end of "Rhapsody Of Fire" and on through "This Way Before," Di Meola obviously enjoying seeing if Ortiz can keep up with him, and Ortiz welcoming the challenge – and he does keep up. And that's what else comes through, how "tight" the band is. The band, and the Strucz String Quartet that accompanies them - András Strucz on cello, Gyula Benkö on viola,

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Gábor Csonka on 1st violin and Victor Uhzik on 2nd violin. On piano – beautiful and sonorous piano – and synths is Mario Parmisano, while on drums is Ernie Adams. Each of these players, as Di Meola himself of course, are dynamic players able to shift from those fragile pieces to the meatier sections with ease. In all there are 11 pieces including "Innamorata," "Misterio" "Orient Blue" and others. Each piece is a story, a journey, told beautifully but with much complexity. And although Di Meola mainly uses but one guitar, a hollow body amplified acoustic (that seen on the DVD cover), for 95% of the performance, his manipulation of the strings, and use of some pedals, makes that one guitar sound like several.

The setting for the concert is the Scala Theater - an intimate venue that is the perfect locale for a recital as this. This is strictly performance though; Di Meola speaks to the audience only once or twice (at least on the included footage), and scenes of the audience are few. So what you get is the audience-like view of the concert, shown from various angles, but mostly head on to each performer. The direction, by the way, is also excellent, the focus being on the correct performer at the correct time – when Di Meola solos, the camera's main focus is on him; when Parmisano is tickling those ivories, the focus is on him.

As one comes to expect from a DVD, the picture is crisp and clear, the sound excellent as well. There are two bonus features – a biography of Di Meola, where we learn (those who didn't already know, at least) that Piazzolla was a mentor and friend to Di Meola, and thus the two pieces also serve as tribute to that friendship and admiration. Piazzolla was an Argentinian bandoneon (similar to an accordion) player known for his tango music. The two pieces included here are "Libertango" (which Di Meola also performed on his World Sinfonia - *The Grande Passion* album in 2000 (Telarc)) and "Fugatta." The other bonus is a "Making of..." segment, which is truly that, following the group and those responsible for the show from start to stage (set up to show time, in other words), with a smattering of comments from Di Meola and Adams. It's an interesting glimpse into what goes into a show of this sort; the planning and planting of microphones and how many, for example.

I enjoyed watching the performance, and the music was equally fantastic. It's one you can watch over and over, just to marvel at the performances, especially watching, and trying to keep up with sometimes, Di Meola's fingers (though one should note, this isn't speed for the sake of showiness, but a result of the passion involved in the piece – and you do realize how intense Di Meola is when playing, though not so much that he can't occasionally spare a smile to his band mates, mostly Ortiz).

The sound format is Stereo/Dolby Digital 4.1, with a 16:9 picture format. The main language is... well, it says English, but other than the short documentary, the language is music, but menus are available in other languages as well (though I didn't test this).

Rating: 5/5

[See also Keith's review -ed.]

More about One Of These Nights:

Track Listing: Innamorata / Misterio / Azzurra / Orient Blue / Rhapsody Of Fire / This Way Before / One Night Last June / Fugatta / Libertango / Beyond The Mirage / Egyptian Danza

Features: Biography, Making Of

Musicians:

Al Di Meola - guitars

Mario Parmisano - acoustic piano and synths

Gumbi Ortiz - percussion

Ernie Adams - drums

Andr as Sturcz - cello

Gyula Benk o - viola

G bor Csonka - 1st violin

Victor Uhzik - 2nd violin

Contact:

Website: www.aldimeola.com

Note: will open new browser window

Discography

- *Land Of The Midnight Sun* (1976)
- *Elegant Gypsy* (1977)
- *Casino* (1978)
- *Splendido Hotel* (1980)
- *Friday Night In San Francisco* (1981)
w/John McLaughlin and Paco De Lucia
- *Electric Rendezvous* (1982)
- *Tour de Force- "Live"* (1982)
- *Passion, Grace & Fire* (1983)
w/McLaughlin and De Lucia
- *Cielo e Terra* (1985)

- *The Al Di Meola Project: Tiramisu* (1987)
- *Kiss My Axe* (1991)
- *World Sinfonia* (1991)
- *The Best of Al Di Meola: The Manhattan Years* (1992)
- *World Sinfonia/Heart Of The Immigrants* (1993)
- *Scenario* (1993)
- *The Essence Of Al Di Meola* (1994)
- *Orange and Blue* (1994)
- *The Rite of Strings* (1995)
- *The Guitar Trio* (1996)
w/McLaughlin and De Lucia
- *Di Meola Plays Piazzolla* (1996)
- *The Infinite Desire* (1998)
- *Winter Nights* (1999)
- *Flesh On Flesh* (2002)

- *One Of These Nights* (2004) (DVD)

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