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AL DIMEOLA - SPEAK A VOLCANO-RETURN TO ELECTRIC GUITAR— www.in-akustik.com

San Marco; One Night Last June; Azzura; Mi Longa Del Angel; Rhapsody of Fire; Hypnose; Red Moon; Tena De Maria; Tangata; Double Concerto; Tao; Senor Mouse; Fugata. In Conversation With Al Di Meola; Al's Guitar Tips.

PERSONNEL: Al Di Meola, guitar; Mario Parmisano, keyboards; Gumbo Ortiz, percussion; Joel Taylor, drums; Mike Pope, bass

By Clive Griffin

Speak A Volcano—Return To Electric Guitar is a comprehensive DVD package that provides fans with a multitude of ways to experience the music and ideas of guitarist Al Di Meola. This DVD includes both musical performances as well as a conversation with Di Meola and a track featuring him presenting tips on playing guitar. If you happen to make music, then the latter two tracks will be of ample interest, especially to those who idolize or otherwise want to sound like, play like or be like Di Meola.

Di Meola first established himself when he dazzled audiences of Chick Corea's Return To Forever group with his technical wizardry on guitar in the 1970s. His own solo efforts bolstered his reputation.

Speak A Volcano features thirteen tracks with Di Meola returning to electric guitar in the context of a quintet. The suggestion in the title of Di Meola's return to electric guitar is kind of a play on words—of course alluding to Di Meola's association as a member of Return To Forever, the 1970s fusion group led by Chick Corea. It's not as if Di Meola hasn't picked up the instrument in the ensuing 30 years. He is held in high esteem among the most highly regarded guitarists in jazz and specifically, the fusion genre. As fans well know, his musical explorations on both acoustic and electric guitars have been diverse—exploring a wide array of styles.

There are seven originals composed by Di Meola, five by Astor Piazzola, and a reprise of "Senor Mouse" a lively composition by Corea, that he often performed with the composer during the 1970s. Recorded in Leverkusen, Germany in November 2006, *Speak A Volcano* features a group of players who match and spark Di Meola's energy—including Joel Taylor on drums, Mike Pope on bass and Mario Parmisano on keyboards. Indeed, on *Speak A Volcano*, Di Meola fulfills the hopes and expectations of those who are here to experience the dramatic runs, sound canvases, and explosive energy for which he is noted, and which he creates and delivers here in this performance as well. If you've been a Di Meola fan you've probably bought albums and videos of him playing acoustic guitar, and perhaps even seen him many times—including in the Rite of Strings group with Stanley Clarke and Jean Luc Ponty. If you haven't taken a closer look recently though, among the more astonishing aspects about Di Meola are that his physical appearance and his technical finesse on the guitar haven't changed or diminished at all. In this video, he is dressed casually, electric guitar in hand and burning up the fretboard. It's kind of like a flashback to the mid-1970s, and with the bonus of his 30 years of musical experience added to the mix.

The first couple of tracks are lengthy and there's a lot of stretched-out, meaty playing throughout "San Marco" and "One Night Last June." Other versions of those two songs appear on two earlier Di Meola albums: *Consequence of Chaos* and *Kiss My Axe*.

Speak A Volcano-Return to Electric Guitar does offer just that on the first two tracks, and on the closing tracks "Tao" and the extended version of Corea's "Senor Mouse." The eight tracks beginning with "Azzura" feature Di Meola on acoustic guitar.

The video is crystal clear. Camera angles are exceptional—bringing the viewer up close and personal with the performers and the performance. Audio fidelity is top notch, as are the mixes that comprise this sterling production. The seamless presentation adds to the enjoyment of this state-of-the-art performance by one of the more high-profile guitar voices in jazz.