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**DiMeola, Al: Speak A Volcano-Return to Electric Guitar (DVD)**

Amazingly enough, *Return to Electric Guitar* is the first DiMeola DVD to feature his incredible electric skills. You would think with a catalog so profound, there would be others? Not in this case. Beautifully filmed with crystal clear sound, (Dolby Digital 5.1) *Speak A Volcano* was recorded live in Germany (2006). For the first few songs this concert really makes up for any lost time in the electric department because this sonic spectacular contains some of his most dynamic recordings, --captured completely live-- prompting you to listen more eclectically, intently and effortlessly, due to the inspired performances of all of those involved.

The song selection (13 in total) really highlights the incredible stylistic variety of this legendary performer. Interestingly, not all of these songs are electric? The whole mid-section of the DVD is comprised of various acoustic selections before returning to an electric performance for the last few compositions. Not that it would cause one to complain, but it did come as a surprise that as much as 50% of the concert was acoustic. Looking at the song selection, some will want more from his classic period and that is understandable, but keep in mind that Al is still making progress in many regards (incredible considering his advancing age) and this performance in particular really captures his ever burgeoning sensitivity to the under appreciated art of "touch dynamics." It really takes you by surprise when you see him in such firm control of every nuance of his sound and how it's projected. In the opener "San Marco" you will see him do everything from his aggressive fast runs, to rolling back the volume and "getting in touch;" not to mention his incredible cello vibrato technique. (Talk about touch!) There is a lot of balance, not so much emphasis on the overt fast passages as much as before (they are there) and it is a gas to see him chord comp. behind the band. It should be mentioned... anyone who enjoyed *Orange and Blue* (1994), already knows that he is capable of a considerable amount of restraint in his playing.



One of the true highlights of the cd is the interplay with long-time percussionist Gumbi Ortiz. After working with each other for so long you can see that they can almost read each others mind as there is a playful musical dual in the song "Red Moon". Al interjects some humor when he formally introduces him and goes on to call him his longest lasting relationship--well, professionally. Pretty funny-- for a jazzer! There is also one hell of a jam in "Señor Mouse" where everybody is shooting for the moon. These guys are so good that you can't really tell what is "improv" or formally practiced sections, and nobody in the band is giving any direct hints--if you know what I mean?

It could be said that Dimeola's true ace card is the intervallic complexity found in the solo-style compositions; coupled with an incredibly refined articulation ability, where he allows each note to retain its full value in relation to duration. Just check out the huge intervallic leaps in "Hypnose" (another highlight) and you will be amazed at how easily he navigates the great divide with his astounding alternate picking ability. Al has never been known to be an uncoordinated double picker (there are more than you care to believe) and even on his worst day, would never have to resort to cheating. There is even a bonus features section where Al breaks down some of the finer points of his technique and describes some of what I am saying. Do you know what a private lesson with Dimeola would cost? That alone is worth the price of admission!!! Anyway, after watching him, you just might swear off metal for awhile. You've been warned!!

Fans of DiMeola are encouraged to pick this up without giving it a second thought, and who cares what it costs! For those aspiring to play or climb to a higher musical consciousness--this is your first class pass to the sky!

**Track Listing**

1. San Marco
2. One Night Last June
3. Azzura
4. Mi Longa Del Angel
5. Rhapsody of Fire
6. Hypnose
7. Red Moon
8. Tena De Maria
9. Tangata

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