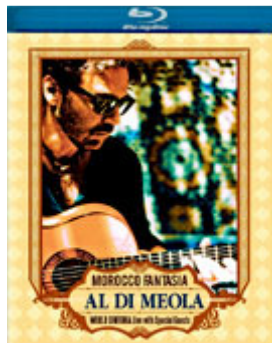



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Case Number 23186: Small Claims Court



## Al Di Meola: Morocco Fantasia (Blu-ray)

[MVD Visual](#) // 2011 // 71 Minutes // Not Rated  
 Reviewed by Judge Russell Engebretson // January 24th, 2012

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### The Charge

Al Di Meola and his band play a rousing and warmly received set of jazz fusion tunes at the Mawazine Festiv.

### The Case

Al Di Meola is best known for his mid-Seventies electric guitar pyrotechnics in Chick Corea's jazz-rock fusion *Forever*, and his acoustic collaboration with Paco De Lucia and John McLaughlin that led to the 1981 release *in San Francisco—Live*. The latest release, **Al Di Meola: Morocco Fantasia (Blu-ray)**, is a showcase of tu and arranged by Di Meola.

The concert was recorded live in Rabat, Morocco, at the Mawazine Musique du Monde Festival and filmed by Cabras and Roberto Molinari. Al Di Meola was joined by fellow band mates Fausto Beccalossi (accordion), Pic (guitar), Gumbi Ortiz (percussion), Peter Kazas (drums), and Victor Miranda (bass), as well as guests Said Cl Abdellah Meri (violin), and Tarik Ben Ali (percussion).

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Recommended

- "Misterio"
- "Siberiana"
- "Double Concerto"
- "Michaelangelo's 7th Child"
- "Gumbiero"
- "Turquoise"
- "Encore"
- "Egyptian Danza"

All the songs, with the exception of "Double Concerto," are original Di Meola compositions.

Di Meola spends most of the concert playing plectrum style on his Conde Hermanos nylon string guitar. He plays a flame-topped, multicolored Paul Reed Smith electric for the final song, "Egyptian Danze." The tunes (now sold as jazz fusion—"rock" has been dropped) are mostly a hybrid of jazz, flamenco, and Middle Eastern-flavored tango undercurrent nicely abetted by Beccalossi's marvelous accordion riffs. The second guitar player, Pio, contributes some beautiful arpeggiated rhythms, but is almost never seen on film. On display or not, Alfonsi is a consummate professional, as are all the other musicians.

The Blu-ray case claims this is a 123-minute disc, but the actual concert is only 71 minutes. The extras pad the time out by around two hours. Extras are as follows:

- Rehearsals (7:37)
- Soundcheck (5:25)
- "Bazar 1" (4:21)
- "Bazar 2" (5:08)
- "Roof Solo" (2:47)
- "Mawazine Suite: Part 1-4" (18:14)
- Morocco (3:09)
- Photo Gallery (4:21)
- Teaser (3:14)

The "Rehearsals," "Roof Solo," and "Mawazine Suite" provide about a half-hour of music, all in CD-quality LP. "Bazar" sequences feature Di Meola poking about Moroccan bazaar stalls, haggling with a seller, and playing some local musicians. Overall, it's a fine set of extras, but missing a commentary or voiceover narration.

The 1.78:1/1080p high definition transfer on **Al Di Meola: Morocco Fantasia (Blu-ray)** is decent, sporting saturated colors and good contrast. Most of the concert closeups are soft, probably due to being shot at a low angle from the stage, but not enough to greatly mar the visuals. I like discrete, well-mixed surround, but the 5.1 DTS Audio is strictly echoes in the rear and center speakers, nothing to get excited about. For this disc, I prefer the stereo presentation, which is crisp and dynamic with plenty of "air" around the instruments—a fine example of how resolution audio can sound when properly engineered.

I have to admit, my brief flirtation with jazz-rock fusion was abandoned decades ago (although I still have a *The Mahavishnu Orchestra*), and Di Meola's plectrum shred style of guitar playing is not to my taste. Despite brilliance and guitar mastery, most of the performances struck me as emotionally flat—sophistication, speed, do not necessarily yield moving music.

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That being said, I did enjoy his interpretation of "Double Concerto," an intricate tango composition by Astor those unfamiliar with Di Meola, I'd suggest sampling a few of his tunes before committing to a purchase, but undoubtedly be pleased with this lovingly captured concert, for the music as well as the Blu-ray audio and vi

#### The Verdict

Not guilty.

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