

FFanzeen: Rock'n'Roll Attitude With Integrity

Through the writings and photography of Robert Barry Francos, a view of the arts and culture, including everyday life.

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DVD Review: Michael Schenker Temple of Rock, Live in Europe

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Images from the Internet



Michael Schenker Temple of Rock, Live in Europe
Directed by Bernhard Baran (Tilburg) and Blue Leach (London)
In-akustik GmbH & Co.
135 minutes (including bonuses), 2012
In-akustik.com
Michaelschenkerhimself.com
MVDvisual.com

For the greater good or bad, Germans are known for their precision. With his guitar in hand, Michael Schenker has proven over the decades that he knows his way around a Metal fretboard. His decades on the stage and in the studio have rightfully made him a legend.

Despite his name on the helm, Schenker is a member of the band, standing to the side with fingers ablazing. This show is especially noteworthy because, as singer Doogie White says in his thick burr early on, that they had to erect a barrier in front of the stage because

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About Me

Robert Barry Francos
Currently living in Saskatoon (email at RBF55@msn.com for address). From 1977-88, I used to publish a print version of a music magazine in New York called FFanzeen, which dealt with the wide-ranging independent music scene. I also photographed many bands from the period (and since). Now I write this blog, and have a column at jerseybeat (dot) com (slash) quietcorner (dot) html. And the beat goes on.

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on it were three live Scorpions, invoking the band that earned the three world-wide prominence.

During the 1970s and '80s, while I was listening to a lot of basic I-IV-V on the stages of the likes of CBGBs and Max's Kansas City, the closest I got to metal was probably Ross the Boss Funicello of the Dictators. Meanwhile, Schenker traveled the world living off his guitar in one of the better known, groundbreaking metal bands. He is exactly four months older than I am, and yet we are musically worlds apart.

The question this brings to me is, at what point does it start style becoming more focused on what Jacques Elull referred to as "technic" rather than on the music? With Hendrix, there was no doubt that he was music based, and no song sounded the same twice. Schenker is a superb musician, no one can argue with that and I would not even begin to broach the topic, and yet, I seriously wonder when does it become too clinical? Celine Dion is a surgical singer, and that makes her dry as a bone, all the emotion ripped out of her songs. That is not to say that Schenker's guitar is emotionless, but it certainly borders on a Metal cliché, albeit technically sharp as a razor's edge or a doctor's scalpel, and one he helped foster.

The same can be said about vocalist Doogie. He hits all the notes, both literally and figuratively. He certainly can be seen as a Metal cliché: high pitch and wavering vocals (especially on the last note of each stanza line), leather vest over black tee-shirt, tight black pants, shoulder length hair, check, check and check. The Michael Schenker Group (MSG) has their sound down to a science, which is ironic that this tour is to promote the latest recording, the religiously metaphorically titled, Temple of Rock.

The fact is that the MSG is a multi-talented band from beginning to end. From what I read, Schenker particularly likes this group (sometimes he has different people back him from city to city, much as does Chuck Berry, the true king of Rock and Roll), and he used this line-up to do this European leg of the tour. Everyone on the stage seems to be having fun.

A good thing is that being as established as they are, they can focus on what they're doing, rather than needing to rely on theatrics like jumping off speakers, or running around the stage like a mad person (now, that being said, Iggy does it and makes it work, but I digress...). There are no exploding pots of pyrotechnics, but rather a reliance on some of their varied classics, including "Armed and Ready," "Another Piece of Meat," "Shoot Shoot," "Rock Bottom," and their best known, "Rock Me Like a Hurricane," with its ear worm chorus.

The DVD is broken up into two separate concerts in very different venues. The main section is taken from a show at the O13 theater in Tilburg, Netherlands, on May 13, 2011, then in the bonus section, there is a short set at the 2011 High Voltage Festival in London, on May 24, with a few songs repeated from the Tilburg show (see the set lists below). Both shows have different feels to them. One reason is musicianship.

At the Tilburg show, Doogie is in command of the band, and he and Schenker rightfully get the lion's share of camera attention. There is a brief guitar solo by Wayne Findlay in the first half of "Rock Bottom" before Schenker takes back his guitar god mantle. Schenker's recent

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collaborator, Michael Voss, comes out for a single song to vocalize for “Hanging On.”

At the open air High Voltage Fest, Voss is the sole vocalist, sans Doogie, and he does a fine job as well, giving a different flavor to the songs, being a lot more active on the stage. His voice is quite different than Doogie’s, and yet there are other similarities are astounding, with the shoulder length blond hair, and (cloth) vest over black shirt, and the high voice with the waiver at the end of the last word of the stanza sentence. I could be wrong, but I believe the band as a whole plays faster with Voss. His voice is also a bit rougher with a deep growl, which I actually like better. Doogie does come out for the last song, with Voss on harmony and cowbell. They are also joined for a couple of songs by Schenker’s brother, Rudolf (making it *four* members of the Scorpions on the same stage for “...Hurricane,” and with Voss picking up his ax as well, that’s a four-guitar wall of sound), ex-Journey singer Jeff Scott Soto, and UFO bassist Pete Way. This may excite some.

The other extra is a 10-minute pre-show backstage at O13, which has its moments, but is mostly uninteresting. Doogie is definitely the most entertaining here. Though, for a digression, it should be noted to Handsome Dick Manitoba (speaking of the Dictators), that Schenker is wearing a Yankees cap.

One thing I can say about the MSG, no matter what the incarnation, is that they are extremely high energy. There are a couple of ballads, but mostly this is full tilt, and they never waiver. Not bad for a bunch of guys in their ‘50s, most in the latter half of that decade.

But that begs a bigger question: why does Schenker dress like Justin Beiber?

Tilburg, Netherlands

Band:

Michael Schenker (lead guitar)
Doogie White (vocals)
Herman Rarebell (drums)
Francis Bucholtz (bass)
Wayne Findlay (rhythm guitar / keyboards)

Song list

Into the Arena
Armed and Ready
Lovedrive
Another Piece of Meat
Hanging On
Cry For the Nations
Let Sleeping Dogs Lie
Coast to Coast
Assault Attack
Before the Devil Knows You’re Dead
Lights Out
On and On
Let it Roll
Shoot Shoot
Rock You Like a Hurricane
Rock Bottom

Encore:

Holiday
Blackout
Doctor Doctor

Bonus: 2011 High Voltage Festival in London , May 24

Band:

Michael Schenker (lead guitar)
Michael Voss (vocals)
Herman Rarebell (drums)
Elliot "Dean" Rubinson (bass)
Wayne Findlay (rhythm guitar / keyboards)

Song list

Armed and Ready
Another Piece of Meat
Rock You Like a Hurricane
Hanging On
Doctor Doctor

Bonus Video:

Posted by [Robert Barry Francos](#) at [12:01 AM](#) 

Labels: [FFanzeen](#), [German Rock](#), [heavy metal](#), [High Voltage Festival](#),