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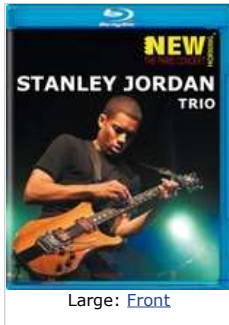
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Stanley Jordan Trio: The Paris Concert Blu-ray

in-akustik | 2007 | 130 mins | Not rated | May 18, 2009



Large: Front

Video

Video codec: VC-1  
Video resolution: 1080i  
Aspect ratio: 1.78:1

Audio

DTS-HD MA 5.1  
LPCM 5.1  
Dolby Digital 2.0

Subtitles

None

Disc

25GB Blu-ray Disc

Price

List price: \$24.95  
Third party: **\$16.01** (Save 36%)  
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Blu-ray review

Movie 4.0  
Video 3.0  
Audio 4.5  
Extras 2.0  
Overall 4.0

Playback

Region A (B, C untested)

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Stanley Jordan Trio: The Paris Concert Blu-ray Review

Stanley Jordan "tap dances" his way through some amazing guitar pyrotechnics.

Reviewed by Jeffrey Kauffman, February 5, 2010

I have always been astounded that so many beginning musicians begin their musical explorations on the guitar. Despite being an at least competent pianist, I have never been able to master the fretboard technique to really be able to eke out even the most basic chords on the guitar. I blame my somewhat stubby fingers for this inability, but of course my more musically astute colleagues point out that I have no problem voicing extremely complex chords on the piano with those same stubby fingers. Perhaps it's the more "graph like" quality of voicing items on the guitar that throws me off, or something endemic to actual guitar technique. I might have had better luck had I adopted Stanley Jordan's innovative, almost keyboard-esque, approach: instead of using his left hand to finger notes and his right hand to strum, Jordan exploits the "tapping" technique where he uses both hands to play the fretboard almost like a pianist percussively presses the keys. Surprisingly, Jordan's approach doesn't result in an overly staccato sound, and in fact there are beautifully sustained legato passages in a lot of Jordan's work. This 2007 Paris concert, part of in-Akustik's New Morning (a Paris nightclub) Blu-ray series, finds the guitarist and his ace band in fine form as they move through both originals and standards.



Stanley Jordan

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The history of jazz guitar is peppered with a number of really interesting and innovative African American artists. In the 1960's Wes Montgomery's nonchalant take on the West Coast jazz movement, highlighted by his brilliantly silky octave work, made him one of the few jazz artists of his era to break through to a wider pop audience, especially with his extremely popular releases on Creed Taylor's CTI label. It was Montgomery himself who evidently told CTI's distributor Herb Alpert about another up and coming guitarist, a gentleman named George Benson. Of course Benson took Montgomery's approach of jazz inflected pop tunes to a new level of popular success, becoming one of the very few jazz artists to score Top 10 singles. While Jordan hasn't had that same level of across the board popular appeal, he has become one of the more enduring jazz guitarists of his generation and was the first artist to release product on the reborn Blue Note label in the 1980's. Now some 30 years later, he's approaching elder, or at least middle aged, statesman status, but he still approaches his axe and the tunes themselves with a youthful insouciance and exuberance.

Jordan begins the evening with a solo tour through "Yesterday," which he gives a gently rolling triplet feel. A couple of songs later, he demonstrates one of the benefits of his tap technique when he sits at a Yamaha grand piano and begins to simultaneously play both the keys and his guitar on an extended fantasia that ultimately leads into a nicely swinging version of Horace Silver's "Song for my Father." Jordan acquires himself more than admirably on both the piano and guitar in this harmonically relatively simple and straightforward piece. I half expected Jordan to pull a trifecta and start playing a trumpet as well when he moved onto the Miles Davis classic "All Blues," but apparently piano and guitar were enough to keep him occupied this time around. This piece offers a neat, if short, opening solo by bassist Charnett Moffett.

Jordan demonstrates his versatility, even his daring, when he then moves onto some pieces from the classical repertoire, which he deconstructs with a jazzman's ear. It's interesting that he chose Bela Bartok's *Concerto for Orchestra* to "examine," as it were, as Bartok famously utilized quartal harmonies (i.e., based on fourths), something which Jordan himself uses in his unusually tuned guitar, which contains only perfect fourths, instead of the typical E-A-D-G-B-E tuning. Jordan then takes his recompositional technique to a solo guitar rendition of Mozart's Piano Concerto #21, Second Movement, which became an international hit in the 1960's as the *Theme to 'Elvira Madigan'*. Here Jordan recasts the melody in a sly, quasi-rock 6/8 meter.

Rounding out the final third of the concert are several less unusual selections, including a nice, understated (if occasionally strangely outré) version of John Coltrane's "Naima," as well as another Lennon-McCartney masterpiece, "Because." Moffett once again demonstrates his mastery in an extended solo introduction to "Amazing Grace," which includes a variety of fun techniques, including plucking his strings below the bridge, and various augmented electronic effects as he bows at other times. A couple of Jordan originals are sprinkled into this mix. Drummer David Haynes also provides excellent, unshowy support throughout the entire concert.

This is a surprisingly introspective, often Impressionistic, hour and a half of music. Less ostensibly histrionic than some of the other concerts in the New Morning series, it nonetheless amply demonstrates Jordan's unerring musicality and the genius both of his technique and his understanding. It's a fine selection of often unusual elements, and jazz lovers should find it well worth their while.

Video **BBB**



Stanley Jordan Trio arrives on Blu-ray courtesy of in-Akustik, with a 1080i 1.78:1 image encoded via VC-1. While the bulk of this rather dark concert looks okay, if not spectacular, it is hampered by some unfortunate artifacting, probably due to its interlaced source material. Right off the bat you'll notice some nascent moiré and shimmer in the houndstooth straps over Jordan's shoulders. It's not too bad from midrange, but the close-ups are fairly bothersome and may turn off the more picky videophile. Contrast and black levels are exceptional throughout, and detail can be quite good as well. The smoky background of the club is very well rendered, and Jordan's face and fingers are shown in all their glory. All told, this is a generally solid, if ultimately unremarkable, Blu-ray effort.

Audio **BBBBB**

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As has been the case on almost all of these in-Akustik offerings, we're given the choice between two uncompressed 5.1 tracks, a DTS-HD MA and an LPCM, as well as (rather strangely, as some of you have pointed out in PM's to me) a compressed Dolby Digital 2.0 track. I was a bit surprised that I found the LPCM 5.1 a bit more robust than the DTS-HD MA, especially in the low end. When Jordan and Moffett really exploit their lower registers, while the DTS-HD MA is certainly fine, the LPCM really pops, with a full throated sound that was a lot of fun to listen to. Jordan's glistening guitar and piano work is ably reproduced here, with absolutely no brittleness. Dynamic range and fidelity are both top notch. My only question (as evidently it has been for some of you as well) is, why no uncompressed stereo offering? The DD 2.0 track just sounds anemic when compared to the two uncompressed 5.1 offerings, and I doubt anyone is going to want to bother with it unless their equipment necessitates.

#### Supplements BBB



"In Conversation with Stanley Jordan" is a pretty good 12:02 interview with the guitarist, where he goes into some detail on his biographical background as well as the genesis and development of his unusual technique.

#### Final words BBBBB



Stanley Jordan epitomizes that kind of "quiet fire" coolness that augments the best purveyors of jazz. This is a great concert that should engage listeners right from the get go. Jordan isn't flashy, but he is a remarkably facile musician on at least two instruments, and he's supported by a fantastic bassist and drummer here.

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