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Michael Schenker Group: The 30th Anniversary Concert-Live in Tokyo

For the 30th Anniversary of the debut of MSG, guitar legend Michael Schenker brought together original vocalist Gary Barden, drummer Simon Phillips, bassist Neil Murray, and guitarist/keyboard player Wayne Findlay, and took them to Japan to start a world tour. Captured on both CD and DVD, this review is of the audio portion of this January 2010 concert that showcases many MSG classics near and dear to fans of the German guitar god.



Despite all the problems surrounding the Schenker camp in recent years, Michael sounds here like he's left any issues behind and gotten back to doing what he does best, and that's play some mean guitar. His trademark solos and riffs are all over this 2 CD set, and it's great to hear his inspired playing on classics like "Cry For the Nations", "Feels Like a Good Thing", "Armed and Ready", "Into the Arena", "On and On", and of course "Attack of the Mad Axeman". The majority of the songs covered here are from the first two MSG albums, plus "Rock My Nights Away" from *Built to Destroy* (sadly, that's the lone cut here from the underrated third MSG album), the mandatory "Rock Bottom" and "Doctor, Doctor" from his days with UFO, and a couple of newer pieces. Of the newer songs, "I Want You", "Dance Lady Gypsy", and "Ride On My Way" are decent enough hard rockers, but "A Night to Remember" is mostly forgettable and hardly worth the inclusion here. It's a real shame Schenker doesn't dip into the excellent *Assault Attack* album and have Barden try his hand at some of those songs, previously sung by Graham Bonnet.

Great to see the always serviceable Neil Murray on board, and pulling in Phillips on drums, who appeared on the debut album back in 1980, was a real score. His thunderous drumming on "Lost Horizons" and "Let Sleeping Dogs Lie" are a real treat. The always steady Findlay has been with Schenker for quite a few years now,

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and provides solid rhythm guitar and keyboards to give the songs that extra depth. Gary Barden, never a great singer, still seems to be the perfect fit alongside Schenker, though he's lost considerable range over the years and struggles to hit many of the high notes. He's revamped his delivery a bit on these songs to compensate for that, and for the most part it works.

Overall, this is a fun set from one of hard rock's legendary guitar heroes, and it's great to see him back in full stride bringing so many of his memorable songs to the stage once again. The CD booklet is chock full of live photos and an essay on the tour, making for a well rounded package.

Track Listing

CD 1

- 1) Welcome Howl
- 2) Feels Like a Good Thing
- 3) Cry For the Nations
- 4) Let Sleeping Dogs Lie
- 5) Armed and Ready
- 6) Victim of Illusion
- 7) Are You Ready to Rock
- 8) I Want You
- 9) A Night to Remember
- 10) Into the Arena

CD 2

- 1) Lost Horizons
- 2) Rock My Nights Away
- 3) On and On
- 4) Attack of the Mad Axeman
- 5) Ride On My Way
- 6) Rock Bottom
- 7) Dance Lady Gipsy
- 8) Doctor, Doctor

Added: October 8th 2010

Reviewer: **Pete Pardo**

Score: ★★★★★

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