



RICK WAKEMAN - THE BURNING (REISSUE) (B-/C+) Music Fusion/Voiceprint Music/MVD Audio, 2007

11 tracks, RT: 35:36

RICK WAKEMAN - G'OLE! (REISSUE) (C+) Music Fusion/Voiceprint Music/MVD Audio, 2007

12 tracks, RT: 37:26

[<http://www.rwcc.com/>]

[<http://www.voiceprint.co.uk/>]

[<http://www.MVDb2b.com/>]

Rick Wakeman explores different sonic territory than what he is usually known for on these two re-releases, soundtracks to two films from the early '80s, Japanese horror cult favorite "The Burning" and "G'Ole!," which was a feature on the 1982 World Cup. THE BURNING starts off nicely with Rick's variations on the movie's themes, the best being the title track and "Variations On The Fire," which kind of have a Tangerine Dream feel. "Sheer Terror And More" is a cool mix of horror movie music with jazz and pop blended in but like many of the other pieces it would make more sense experienced with the movie rather than by itself. Elsewhere we have the hokey "Campfire Story," which is just dialog from the film, sound effect pieces like "The Fire," and the odd "Deliverance"-like "Devil's Creek Breakdown," complete with banjo, fiddle and pedal-steel guitar, Rick nowhere in sight. "The Chase" is suitably creepy and would fit well alongside the "Halloween" soundtrack, making me wonder how the film compares with the music. G'OLE contains full songs rather than including dialog and effects but is actually the weaker of the two, sporting a very dated sound that reminds heavily of Vangelis ("Chariots Of Fire," anyone?). On pieces like "International Flag," "The Dove," "Latin Reel," and "Spanish Holiday," Rick concocts music so happy and upbeat it makes one long for the drama of, say, a Jimmy Buffet concert. You could even put the baby to sleep with "Black Pearls," so sensitive a tune it is. G'OLE is certainly not a bad album, just a little too dainty for my tastes, and as I said earlier, stripped of the movie's context, it really doesn't connect emotionally. So I'll reserve my recommendation on these to Rick Wakeman completists and those who have a particular affinity for film soundtracks.

- Neal Woodall