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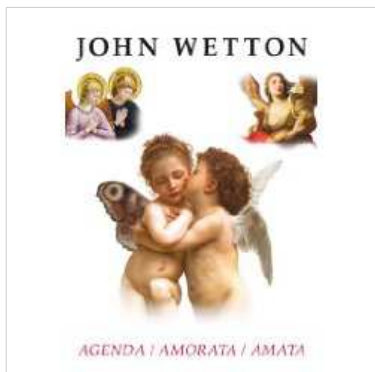
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MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2009

## John Wetton - Agenda/Amorata/Amata CD/DVD Review (Metal Mind)



This is a limited edition (ltd to 1,000 copies) 2CD/1DVD box set that compiles two live shows that John Wetton recorded in Poland in 2003. Recently, I've approached the slew of John Wetton live CDs with some trepidation as I've gotten a few 'bum' ones (*Hazy Monet*, *Live at XM Satellite Radio*) but this set is a real gem. Both shows are soundboard recordings and Wetton sounds in excellent form, both with a full band (*Agenda/Amorata*) and on his near solo acoustic performance (*Amata*).

*Agenda* and *Amorata* are a CD/DVD set from a show that was recorded live in front of a sizable crowd in Poland in

April 2003. The 75+ minute set spans material across Wetton's career and includes songs from King Crimson, UK, Asia and John's solo work. John has grown into his 'elder statesman of rock' role and looks like he is enjoying himself throughout this show. His band is quite top-notch and includes John Mitchell (from Arena) on guitar and Martin Orford (from IQ) on keyboards and flute. The band adds some new life to John's back catalog and does a wonderful job reinterpreting some of the old UK classics. The disc includes great versions of UK's "In the Dead of Night", "Easy Money" and "Rendezvous 602". The set was filmed with multiple cameras and a nice job was done in the editing booth to showcase each of the members of the band. On a related and interesting note, the DVD includes a bonus interview with John Wetton and, while John's candor is fascinating, the video bumps and moves like a hand-held audience bootleg.

*Amata* was also recorded in Poland during the same April 2003 tour. This is an acoustic performance which features John on vocals and acoustic guitar, Martin Orford on keyboards and backing vocals and John Mitchell on guitar and backing vocals. This set is a bit shorter than the electric set on *Amorata* and runs for about 40 minutes. The eleven track set starts with two instrumental pieces ("The Circle of St. Giles" and "Mondrago") before going into King Crimson, Asia and solo material. Unlike the electric set, the focus of this performance is John's clear voice and guitar playing. There is a lot of overlap in material between the acoustic and electric sets but the renditions of the songs are completely different so neither feels like a re-hash of the other. *Amorata* also includes a few more songs from John's solo releases along with a version of King Crimson's "Night Watch".

I don't know what it is about John Wetton and Poland but, next month, John is reuniting with Eddie Jobson for three shows in Poland under the banner of UK's 30th Anniversary. The shows are taking place:

November 3rd--Krakow, Studio Club

November 4th--Warsaw, Palladium

November 5th--Bydgoszcz, Philharmonic Hall

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