

Pendragon - *Concerto Maximo*



Performance ★★★★★★☆☆
Production ★★★★★★☆☆

On October 13th, 2008, British neo-progressive rock veterans, Pendragon, celebrated their 30th anniversary with a nearly three-hour performance at Katowice, Poland's Wyspianski Theater - and fortunately for us it was all captured on this excellent new concert DVD, entitled *Concerto Maximo*. It would have been nice to see these guys recorded at a different venue for once, as this was three in a row at the Wyspianski, but at least you know you are going to get a quality recording at this place.

Pendragon are currently touring behind their latest album, *Pure*, which many fans are calling one of their very best. I have to agree. *Pure* sounds like Nick Barrett has been listening to a lot of Porcupine Tree lately, as he has taken the band in a much heavier and edgier, PT-like, direction. The album's opening track, "Indigo", is an outright monster, but it was sorely missing from this show. Barrett explained in the interviews that he really wanted to play the song, but that they just didn't have enough time to tackle such a complex number with all of the other songs they needed to rehearse. They are also breaking in a new drummer, Scott Higham, and he had about four hours worth of material to learn for the tour.

Concerto Maximo is remarkably similar to Pendragon's 2006 concert DVD, *And Now Everybody To The Stage...*, since it was recorded at the same venue by the same Metal Mind Productions crew. The setlist, however, is what really sets this one apart, as it only features a few of the same songs from their previous two DVDs, and they also debut three of the new *Pure* songs.

Like most other bands of the prog-rock genre, Pendragon have no shortage of multi-part, epics in their repertoire, and they break out a couple of good ones here. The four-part, 18-minute, "Wishing Well", from 2005's *Believe*, really showcases Nick Barrett's amazing guitar skills, and makes for an early highlight of the set. They manage to top that one, later on, dusting off the three-part, 20-minute epic, "Queen Of Hearts", to close out the show.

The absolute highlights of the DVD for me though, were the three *Pure* tracks, "Eraserhead", "The Freak Show", and "It's Only Me". All three of these songs are as good as anything these guys have ever done, and they garnered some of the most enthusiastic crowd response of the night. How refreshing for a band to release some of their best material 30 years into their career.

The longtime fan favorite, "Masters Of Illusion", made its way into the setlist again, and these guys performed it brilliantly. Other standouts were "Voyager", with Peter Gee adding some superb electric slide to Barrett's gorgeous acoustic guitar arrangement. The biggest surprise of the night was the stunning rendition of the *Masquerade Overture* b-side, "King Of The Castle", to kick off the second encore set. Along with some beautifully understated keyboards Clive Nolan also adds some wonderful harmony vocals throughout the song. He should do so more often.

The overall production quality of this DVD was top-notch. Dolby Digital 5.1 surround and 2.0 stereo are your two audio choices, and they both sound superb. The picture looks sharp and vibrant, and the Metal Mind camera crew filmed the show perfectly. Bonus features include a band Interview, Biography, Discography, Photo Gallery, Desktop Images, and Weblinks.

After more than 30 years, Pendragon are not ready to fade away just yet. This year they released two of their best albums and concert DVDs of their career, and I highly recommend them both.

Reviewed by Paul M. Roy - April 2009

[Comments or Complaints?](#)

Technical Details	
<p><u>Audio Transfer</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround • Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo 	<p><u>Video Transfer</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.78:1 - Anamorphic Widescreen
<p><u>Set List</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 01. Walls of Babylon 02. A Man Of Nomadic Traits 03. Wishing Well 04. Eraserhead 05. Total Recall 06. Nostradamus 07. Learning Curve 08. Breaking The Spell 09. Sister Bluebird 10. Shadow 11. The Freak Show 12. The Voyager 13. It's Only Me 14. Masters Of Illusion 15. King Of The Castle 16. And We'll Go Hunting Deer 17. Queen Of Hearts 	<p><u>Performers</u></p> <p>Nick Barrett - Vocals/Guitar Clive Nolan - Keyboards/Backing Vocals Peter Gee - Bass/Guitar/Keyboards/Backing Vocals Scott Higham - Drums/Backing Vocals</p>
<p>Running Time: 162 Minutes</p>	<p>DVD Release Date - April 2009 Performance Date - October 2008</p>



Concerto Maximo

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