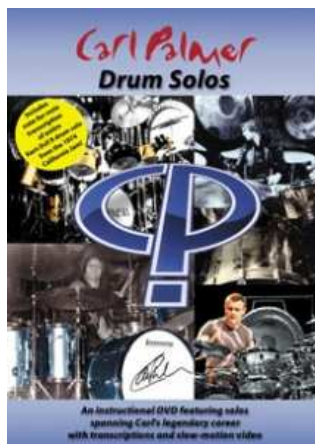




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CARL PALMER – Drum Solos DVD

MVD Entertainment Group - 22nd February 2011

I know what you are thinking 'Carl Palmer releasing a DVD with all his Drum Solos on? EPIC!' but unfortunately the sad reality is that this is merely an insight into a small handful of his solo endeavours. Furthermore, this DVD is billed as an instructional feature and therefore you would expect something truly astonishing; given that in order to reach a standard equal to 10% of Carl Palmer's ability, you'd have to really be on form. Nevertheless, I popped the DVD in the player and eagerly awaited a short intro from the man himself or at least a momentum of gratitude for taking the time in choosing his release over the many alternatives out there. Alas, nothing but a simple menu with the following clips to choose from 'Karn Evil 9 Drum Solo – California Jam 1974', 'The Heat Goes On Drum Solo – Asia – Live 2008' and 'Fanfare for the Common Man Drum Solo – Asia – Live 2009'.

Of course, being a fan of the vintage footage, I promptly clicked for the '74 solo... oh dear. Quite honestly, this is a YouTube quality clip and although I am fully aware that the original recording is going to be dated, there seems an apparent lack of remastering (more so on the audio side) and this is of course rather important for 'instructional' purposes. Nevertheless, I assumed that perhaps my critical side had overcome me and that the 2008/2009 videos would be far more defined and enjoyable. Sadly, I was wrong once more, as these are just stage cam shots and vibration shake is clear on the screen, coupled with a distinct lack (again) of decent audio. So anyway, a little disappointed with what I had seen thus far, I could only assume the 'instructional' side of things were hidden within a menu somewhere.

Unfortunately, this was not the case either. If you want to learn the solo, you have the option of playing (supposedly, although this isn't realistic) along with the video / midi recording at 50%, 75% and 100% speed. The trouble is, this really does not work at all and believe me, I've tried!

As detailed in the summary, there are pdf. Files of the drum transcriptions, although locating them initially was a bit of a faff and of course, you'll need your computer to access them – which isn't so convenient if you are watching it through your TV. Perhaps the more recognised form release by having a DVD and accompanying colour booklet w/ transcriptions would have been more beneficial in this instance.

Bonus footage made my jaw drop.... at first, I was impressed by Palmer's Snare Drum solo, but then I suddenly became aware that the footage was being taken from within the crowd. I noticed this when the individual holding the camera was blocked by a male wandering in front of the shot and his large head had to be avoided with a swift walk around manoeuvre. This is certainly not the quality I would expect from an instructional DVD. More annoying is that as mentioned previously, most of the videos are on YouTube anyway in some form or other, so it renders this release near enough pointless. It is such a shame that Palmer didn't have some form of quality control on this DVD, as it is a genuine let down on all levels. I have seen many instructional DVD's over the years and have personally been informed by a great number, but this was hard work from start to finish and largely un-enjoyable and de-motivating. Such a shame.

Review by Dan Balchin

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