

sábado, 5 de maio de 2012

AL DI MEOLA - MOROCCO FANTASIA (Inakustik/Songsurfer)

Desde sua saída do *Return To Forever*, Al Di Meola tem permeado a comunidade do jazz com um mundano tipo de fusão. O projeto do guitarrista *World Sinfonia* foi maturado dentro de um eclético e cultural supergrupo, e o *Mawazine Festival* em 2009 serviu como o apogeu para o Di Meola compositor. Está registrado no DVD/Blu-ray "Morocco Fantasia", uma aventura em que o arsenal de influências do *World Sinfonia* é capturado pela cuidadosa e atrativa coragem dos cineastas independentes Francesco Cabras e Alberto Molinari. O tamanho é uma sobrecarga sensorial indulgente para o corte: a marca do som de Di Meola remete à vida cinematográfica real de Rabat, Marrocos. Esta marcante performance é marcada por fortes arpejos,

melodias assentadas e polirritmos rouquinhos, que são suportados pelas furiosas pegadas de Di Meola em uma refinada guitarra clássica da *Conde Hermanos*. A química da banda é inegavelmente sólida e seus contrapontos, não convencionais, em uníssono são perfeitos. A interação é orgânica dentro do seu estilo musical. A marca de Di Meola, batidas emotivas e as pausas bastante sentidas brilham em companhia do acordeonista Fausto Beccalossi e do segundo guitarrista Peo Alfonsi. Beccalossi contribui, também, com um melancólico trabalho vocal em uma obra-prima de Astor Piazzolla, "Double Concerto", e o estilo flamenco, sincopado e matizado, de Di Meola demonstra um óbvio conhecimento ao mestre do tango. Em "Gumbiero", o veterano da banda de Di Meola, Gumbi Ortiz, discretamente navega em um exótico bazar de instrumentos percussivos: blocos de madeira e metal, batedor de ovos dentre outros. Na melancólica bossa "Turquoise" ele estabelece a perturbação no deserto. A performance culmina em "Encore" e "Egyptian Danza". Aqui, Di Meola fragmenta tons multidimensionais em seu particular caleidoscópio e a guitarra de Paul Reed Smith dá algum sabor local ao lado do oud de Said Chraibi, do violinista Abdellah Meri e do percussionista Tarik Ben Ali. O melhor de tudo, é que há um tesouro extra apresentando os ensaios sem sofisticação e performances nos tetos que ilustram a enigmática tradição dos boulevards marroquinos.



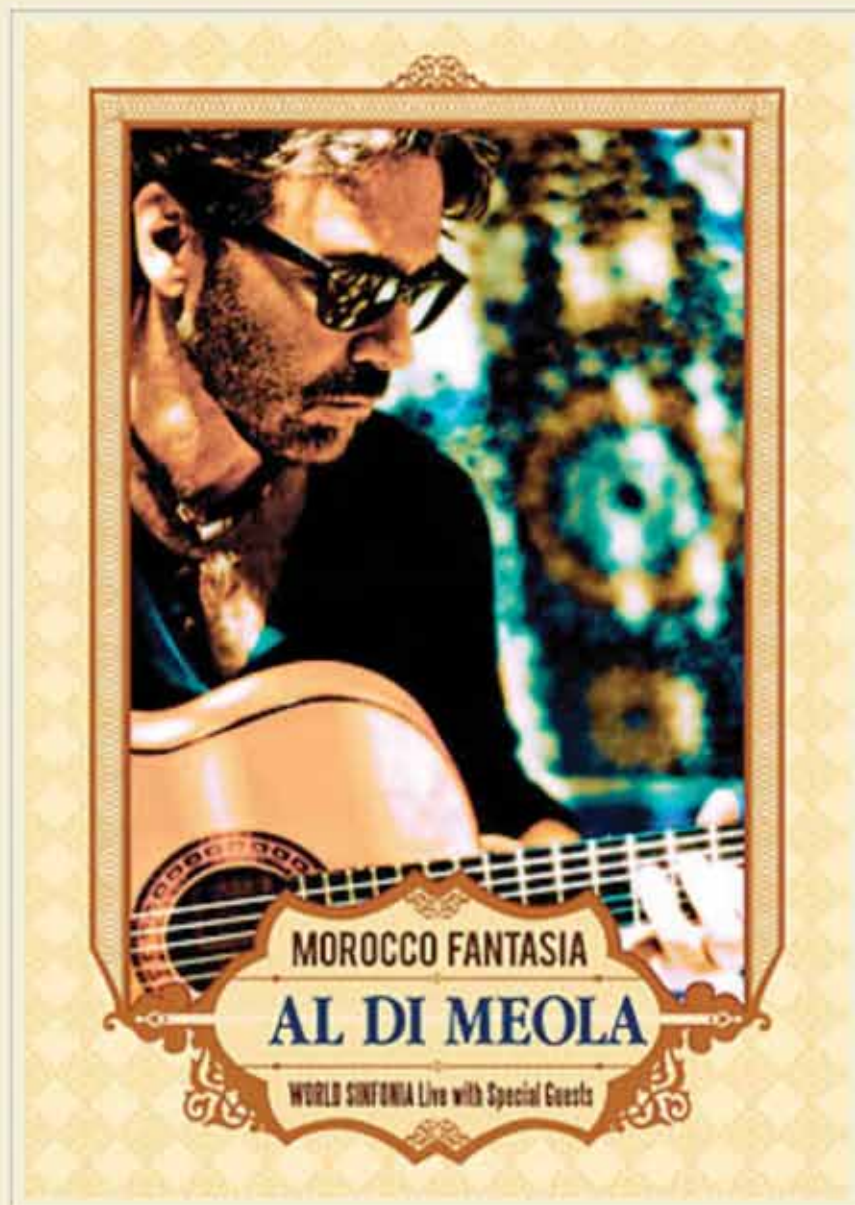
Assistam ao vídeo baixo para conhecer um pouco deste trabalho

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2011

➔ DVD Review: Al Di Meola: *Morocco Fantasia*

Text © Robert Barry Francos/FFanzeen, 2012

Images from the Internet



Al Di Meola: Morocco Fantasia

Cinematography by Francesco Cabras and Alberto Molinari

Produced by Claus Altvater and Al Di Meola

In-akustik, 2011

123 minutes, USD \$19.95

In-akustik.de

MVDvisual.com

Al Di Meola (nee Al Dimeola) certainly has come along way from his native New Jersey to the stage of the Mawazine Festival in Rabat, Morocco, where this DVD was filmed on May 20, 2009. But there's no need to question *why*.

In modern jazz circles, Di Meola is among the most respected guitarists in the world, with lightening speed fingers playing in scale style. Within the first minute, the awe of the viewer is bound to be apparent, as he races around his Conde Hermanos, all the more impressive considering the broad neck and wide space between each string. The thin-body acoustic guitar has a solid flamenco flair.

Di Meola is backed by his band, the World Sinfonia, consisting of accordion (Fausto Beccalossi), second guitar (Peo Alfonsi), bass (Victor Miranda), percussion (Gumbi Oritz), and drum (Peter Kaszas), who dazzle as they sound like sparkles reflecting on the water, dancing around the sounds they produce.

Because of the length of the songs, ranging from 8 to over 21 minutes, they get a chance to all play in ways that each musician is highlighted at different moments. The sound is incredibly crisp and the cinematography is phenomenal, as we see all the musicians intercut with scenes of the immediate surroundings, local nature (e.g., birds, fauna), and all around Rabat. The listener can also just close your eyes and escape in the sounds. Fortunately, there is no interference as musically the concert plays through with no sound interruptions other than rounds of applause between each cut.

If I was to categorize the sound by the style of music they play, I could say adult contemporary jazz. Definitely something you'd hear a lot on the lite jazz station; incredibly well executed, yet light on the ear. All but one of the songs are originals, and all have both intense and soothing variations of rhythms, tempos, and melodies. It seems appropriate that much of the feel is heavily Arabic influenced, and with the thanks to an almost upfront accordion, there is also a French flavor.

For the two encore songs, guest musicians come onstage, including Said Chraibi (oud), Abdellah Meri (violin) and Tarik Ben Ali (Percussion). They give an even more Arabic seasoning to the mix.

In the extras, there are two more pieces with just Di Meola, Chraibi, Meri and Ali, totaling 21 minutes. For one of these, Di Meola plays his multi-colored electric guitar, something he rarely does these days due to a bout with tinnitus.

In all these songs, everyone seems to be mostly having a good time. Mostly?

Here's the thing: I don't know Al Di Meola personally, but my impression here is that he is a demanding and perfectionist taskmaster with an incredibly large ego. Looking a bit like Russell Crowe with his beard, every so often you can see him snatch a look at someone in the Sinfonia as if they did something wrong. I admit I could be misreading this, but that's what is left with me. It's during the extras, though, that I started to get just a little creeped out.

They show some of the rehearsals, and he is snapping at some of the members of his band, and even comments at guest violinist Meri, "Tap your feet! Don't stop! In your life!" Brrrr. It makes me wonder if there is any room for improvisation during the performance from the rest of the World Sinfonia. After all, what makes jazz great are the jams, not just the orchestration. In another couple of bonus clips, Di Meola plays in a local street bazaar with a couple of street musicians, and he while starts off backing, then seems to take over as if he had to have the last word or take the gathering's applause for himself.

That all being said, part of the soundcheck is another extra included, of which the best part is the pieces backstage. At one point a staff member makes a jokingly disparaging remark about Mr. Al, not knowing he's right behind her. Pointed out, she jumps, and he stares at her for a moment and points a finger in a "watch it" tone, but it seems more light than threatening. I liked him at that moment, and wonder if I was wrong...

As with other Inakustik DVDs I've seen, the cinematography is stunning beautiful (both the stage work and the extraneous shots around the venue), the sound is incredibly crisp for a live show, and the packaging is lovely with booklet and photos.

Al Di Meola – Morocco Fantasia, Blu-ray (2011)

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Al Di Meola – Morocco Fantasia, Blu-ray (2011)

Al Di Meola – Morocco Fantasia, Blu-ray (2011)

Performers: Al Di Meola, guitar & World Sinfonia, plus three Moroccan special guests

Filmmakers: Francesco Cabras & Alberto Molinari

TrackList: Misterio, Siberiana, Double Concerto, Michaelangelo's 7th

Child, Gumbiero, Turquoise, Encore, Egyptian Danza

Studio: Inakustik INAL 7004 BD [1/24/12] [Distr. by Naxos]

Video: 16:9 1080i&p HD

Audio: DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1, PCM stereo

Extras: Rehearsals, Soundcheck, Bazar 1 & 2, Roof solo, Mawazine Suite: Parts 1-4, Morocco, Still photo gallery, Teaser

Length: 123 minutes

Rating: *****

Jazz guitarist Di Meola has been one of the leaders in the growing world music movement with his World Sinfonia. This is a filmic record of his third visit to Morocco, to appear at the Mawazine Festival in Rabat with his group plus an oud player, violinist and percussionist from Morocco. There is no spoken material or narrations, even in the extras—the selections are identified with titles at the beginning of each.

Di Meola and the World Sinfonia consists of the guitarist—playing an acoustic guitar that seems to have some sort of wireless connection to an amp and speaker—plus a second guitar, a virtuoso button accordionist, a bassist, drummer and percussionist. The *Double Concerto* as well as other Di Meola works feature extended exchanges between the guitar and accordion, and Fausto Beccalossie tosses off the high-speed note-spinning at a rate I haven't heard from any piano accordionist; plus he sometimes vocalizes. The performers receive a rousing ovation from the audience.

Di Meola says in his notes that this Arabic-speaking nation is the tip of another culture in which there exists a mutual connection. The creative cutting of the concert is peppered with brief Moroccan scenes of a mostly abstract nature, but some with people in pathways or working on small boats. Some of the rapid-fire guitar works are accompanied by quick-cut shots of the nets of the fishermen. In the extras are more of these artistic views of Rabat and the country. The last two selections of the concert bring on the Moroccan guest musicians, with oud player Said Chraibi and violinist Abdellah Meri prominent, and there is more music with local musicians in the extras.

The hi-res surround is excellent, and the Blu-ray transfer looks very good. I did notice that the various creative film shots cut into the concert had some dirt on the frames, whereas the concert was obviously shot on videotape and didn't have that. I was also a bit distracted, as I had been in a previous guitar summit in which Di Meola participated, by his wearing shirts open nearly to the navel to show off his hairy chest. He's such a great guitarist, I'll give him that.

—John Henry