

REVIEWS DVDS



Fusion tunes: R. Bl. Allen, Holdsworth, Chad Wackerman, Alan Pasqua & Jimmy Haslip

BILL BRUFORD'S EARTHWORKS

Video Anthology (Summerfold)

Perhaps it's because of his old prog-rock associations (Yes, King Crimson, Genesis), or the fact that he's British, but drummer Bill Bruford has been undervalued as a jazzandleader ever since his band Earthworks' 1987 debut. The two-volume *Video Anthology* chronicles everything from the forward-thinking group's initial setup, with Bruford's electronic Simmons drums in a mostly acoustic lineup, to 2005, with bassist Laurence Cottle as the only electric musician.

The more recent shows, between 2001 and 2005, are featured on Vol. 1. Introductory footage from the old Bottom Line in New York City features material from the stellar 2001 studio CD, *The Sound of Surprise*, by the all-acoustic lineup of saxophonist Patrick Clahar, pianist Steve Hamilton, bassist Mark Hodgson and Bruford. The inventive drummer's solo intro on "Triplexity" showcases his latest drum kit invention, in which all four tom-toms are flat, level with his snare drum, and a mirror image of one another to either side.

Better camera angles take the disc up a notch as Tim Garland replaces Clahar for a 2002 concert in Buenos Aires. Both the saxophonist and Hamilton take stirring solos during another highlight from *The*

Sound of Surprise, "Revel Without a Pause." Garland's dexterity on bass clarinet and soprano sax even allows the acoustic quartet to tackle "Beelzebub," the mercurial electric opener from Bruford's 1977 solo debut, *Feels Good To Me*.

Garland and Bruford team with Cottle and pianist Gwilym Simcock for six closing tracks from Germany in 2005. From Cottle's darring bass line on "Libreville" to Simcock's chord voicings on "White Knuckle Wedding," Bruford continues to nurture young British jazz talent the way Art Blakey did young Americans.

Vol. 2 features the drummer with the horn section of Django Bates and Iain Ballamy (both doubling on keyboards) and bassist Tim Harries, all of whom appeared on Earthworks' self-titled 1987 debut. Footage from both Germany and Japan in 1991 showcases a very different original group, in which Bruford's Simmons pads outnumber his acoustic drums by more than two-to-one. But his melodic electronic drumming accentuates the lines of Bates (on flar "peck" horn) and Ballamy (saxophone) on signature pieces like "Up North" and "Emotional Shirt."

Three tunes from Bulgaria in 1999 bring the second disc back where the first one started, with Bruford, Clahar, Hamilton and Hodgson. The closing all-acoustic arrangement of "Bridge of Inhibition," from the debut, transforms the piece's original march-

ing band sound into a smaller yet more powerful force. And Bruford takes a closing drum solo that's among the most musical ever recorded, capturing the very essence that separates him from most other percussionists, jazz or otherwise. **BILL MEREDITH**

ALLAN HOLDSWORTH &

ALAN PASQUA

Featuring Chad Wackerman & Jimmy Haslip

(Alitude Digital)



Guitarist Allan Holdsworth and keyboardist Alan Pasqua clearly released this all-star concert DVD to invite comparison to the New Tony Williams Lifetime, the quartet in which they worked together more than 30 years ago. Drummer Williams formed that group (rounded out by bassist Tony Newton) to follow up Lifetime, with guitarist John McLaughlin and organist Larry Young, a band he led after making his name with Miles Davis during the 1960s. Three of the DVD's nine cuts are from *Believe It*, the New Lifetime's scintillating 1975 debut.

Filmed at Yoshi's in Oakland, Calif. last September, the video proves what a slippery slope that comparison can be early on. Bassist Jimmy Haslip's solo highlights the otherwise cautious opener, "The Fifth," and Pasqua's programmed Hammond organ tones prove