



November 19, 2007

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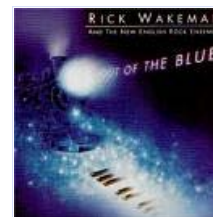
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Wakeman, Rick: Out of the Blue/Fields of Green (remasters)

Pick your poison out of these 2 Fusion re-masters from Rick Wakeman's enormous back catalog: solo techno Rick, with drum machines and loops, or rock band Rick, with all the bravado of his 70's world tour escapades.

To me, Wakeman has always symbolized absolute bombast. The stage cape, the stacked keyboards, the nearby case of beer, the flowing blonde hair, the Melody Maker front page story, the hard partying...even though he's been clean for years, it's hard to escape the Image of Rick Wakeman. He's bigger than big; not even Yes at the height of their powers were able to contain him.



Which is why I prefer *Out Of The Blue*. Wakeman's latest incarnation, The "New" English Rock Ensemble (containing Original Rock Ensemble member Tony Fernandez on drums) is a kick ass conglomeration that can render all the insanity Wakeman's wild solo career had ever cooked up. This 2001 Argentina concert recording provides seed-to-forest coverage of some of Wakeman's best outings. From early solo offerings like "Jane Seymour" and "Catherine Parr," to his world-conquering "Journey To The Centre Of The Earth," to the initial compositions from the original ERE in "No Earthly Connection," to Yes covers, this is a blistering concert that never lets up. Assisting Rick and Fernandez are Dr. Shredder Art Glynne on guitars (check him out on "No Earthy Connection/The Prisoner"), Big-Voiced Damian Wilson on vocals, Lee Pomeroy on Bass and Rick's son Adam on keys. This ensemble rips the hell out of everything they play, including a "who cares I'm not Jon Anderson" rendition of "Starship Trooper" that blows off the roof.

Flip side of the coin is *Fields Of Green*. Far more restrained, even poppy at times, it's a nice departure, somewhat undone by the predominance of the keyboards (used for drums) and some lackluster songwriting. For sure, there's some decent pop selections (The Future Of Love, Tell Me Why, Fields Of Green), some ethereal instrumentals (The Spanish Wizard), combinations of such (The Never Ending Road), and even a rocker or two. For me, it would've been more effective with a live drummer, and I'm not likely to return for a listen anytime soon, but it really depends on your mood, and this is an OK atmospheric album.

Either way, these 2 re-masters will find fans of both Rick's happy ones.

Score a 4 for *Out of the Blue*, and a 3 for *Fields of Green*.

Track Listing

- Out of the Blue**
1. Journey To the Centre Of the Earth
 2. Buried Alive
 3. Jane Seymour
 4. Medley: No Earthly Connection/The Prisoner
 5. Catherine Parr
 6. The Visit
 7. Medley: Return Of the Phantom/Starship Trooper/Wurm
- Fields of Green**
1. Medley: Election '97/Arthur
 2. Medley: Starship Trooper/Wurm
 3. The Promise Of Love
 4. The Spanish Wizard
 5. The Never Ending Road
 6. The Fighter
 7. Tell Me Why
 8. The Rope Trick
 9. The Nice Man
 10. Fields Of Green

Added: November 13th 2007
Reviewer: Steve Fleck
Score: ★★★★★
Related Link: Rick Wakeman Website
 Hits: 75

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