Mahavishnu Orchestra - 1973-12-27 New York City



01. Dream 27:13 02. Trilogy 18:47 03. Birds Of Fire 11:34 04. Sister Andrea 12:01 05. Dance of Maya 19:24 Musicians: Billy Cobham - drums Jerry Goodman - violin Jan Hammer - keyboards Rick Laird - bass John McLaughlin – guitar

This Mahavishnu Orchestra performance, recorded on the first night of a two-night stand at New York City's Avery Fisher Hall, captures one of the very last performances ever by the legendary original lineup. This recording is a fascinating glimpse of the group at the tail end of their existence. In July of 1973, Mahavishnu Orchestra convened at London's Trident Studios to record their ill-fated third studio album. By this point, the relationships within the band were strained and the resulting recordings, which for the first time featured compositions by bandmembers other than McLaughlin, would not see the light of day for several decades. In August and September, McLaughlin and Cobham embarked on a tour with Carlos Santana, further straining the relationships within the band, which would dissolve by the end of the year. The initial classic lineup of the group lasted less than three years and only released two studio albums and one live recording during this era, but these recordings had a profound effect, redefining the jazz/rock fusion movement in the process. Combining the improvisational elements of jazz with the volume and energy of rock music, Mahavishnu Orchestra created music that was often intricate and complex, performed by musicians whose virtuosity thrilled audiences, musicians and critics alike.

Following the captivating take on "Dance Of Maya," they tackle another extended number, "Dream." Again, there is an abundance of exploratory and propulsive playing here, but one of the most interesting aspects of this performance is that McLaughlin plays the first sequence on acoustic guitar, and it is far more compelling than the live version featured on Between Nothingness And Eternity, recorded the previous August. Often this initial sequence was merely a dreamy contemplative introduction to the fireworks to come, but here it is absolutely beautiful and McLaughlin's playing has far more depth and character and Goodman's haunting violin phrases are all the more compelling for it. Despite hollering and rudeness from the audience

(which is audible on the recording), McLaughlin remains focused. As the second, faster section begins, Hammer unleashes his trademark barrage of chords and arpeggios on his Fender Rhodes as the band begins building an elegant melody line. This becomes a head-spinning exercise as McLaughlin and Goodman lock together in unison driving the main section of the composition. This is fast and furious playing at its most intense, with various duets emerging in and out of the fray. This is a jaw-dropping performance that is simply overflowing with energy; seemingly superhuman in its seething intensity.

The recording ends with another track from the Trident sessions, "Trilogy." The first passage develops into an elaborate trade-off between McLaughlin and Hammer, with the guitar dominating. The second section features Goodman's violin dominating and Hammer providing birdcall effects with his synthesizers. Cobham's drumming is particularly impressive during this passage. Then the group suddenly launches into the third section—a aggressive hyperactive jam, first featuring a brief violin solo followed by a scorching solo from McLaughlin. The entire group develops an impressive repetition based on McLaughlin's lead riff that remains captivating as the tape stock unfortunately ran out shortly before the conclusion of the show.

This recording, paired with the following night's recording at the same venue, would be the original lineup's final performances in New York City. Taken together, they provide a wonderful picture of the band's later era material performed at the most extreme levels of improvisation.

Read more about the Mahavishnu Orchestra in Crawdaddy!:

This Mahavishnu Orchestra performance, recorded on the first night of a two-night stand at New York City's Avery Fisher Hall, captures one of the very last performances ever by the legendary original lineup. This recording is a fascinating glimpse of the group at the tail end of their existence. In July of 1973, Mahavishnu Orchestra convened at London's Trident Studios to record their ill-fated third studio album. By this point, the relationships within the band were strained and the resulting recordings, which for the first time featured compositions by bandmembers other than McLaughlin, would not see the light of day for several decades. In August and September, McLaughlin and Cobham embarked on a tour with Carlos Santana, further straining the relationships within the band, which would dissolve by the end of the year. The initial classic lineup of the group lasted less than three years and only released two studio albums and one live recording during this era, but these recordings had a profound effect, redefining the jazz/rock fusion movement in the process. Combining the improvisational elements of jazz with the volume and energy of rock music, Mahavishnu Orchestra created music that was often intricate and complex, performed by musicians whose virtuosity thrilled audiences, musicians and critics alike.

While an argument can be made that the band was more cohesive and eloquent earlier in their all-too-brief career, the performances toward the end of 1973 are simply staggering in their ferocity. This night's recording begins with Billy Cobham's massive gong, as McLaughlin's 12-string arpeggios begin washing over the audience. "Birds Of Fire" is a dramatic opener that unfolds into a dynamic exchange between guitar and drums versus violin, keyboards and bass. In the unusual time signature of 18/8, the interwoven nature of the arrangement makes for a thrilling and intense experience, although one unlike anything most jazz or rock music fans had ever heard before. This is followed by the Jan Hammer composition, "Sister Andrea." Uncharacteristically funky, this elastic groovefest features sizzling 12-string solos from McLaughlin, wild bursts of unorthodox sounds from Hammer and highlights the grittier side to Goodman's violin virtuosity, which sashays and swings, as he pumps his signal through a wah-wah pedal.

The group truly begin hitting their stride on "The Dance Of Maya," with its infectious rhythmic pattern complimenting the melodic line. The set continues with a heavily improvised version of "The Dance Of Maya." There are many moments of brilliance here, but what stands out overall is that here the group is obviously having a wonderfully joyous experience. Following the initial theme, the rhythm section drops out completely leaving the remaining trio. The interaction between Goodman's pizzicato violin, McLaughlin guitar and Hammer's electric piano is full of a humor and playfulness that is absolutely delightful. Cobham and Laird eventually join back in and after a few surprising stop/starts to jolt the audience, they launch into a cosmic jamfest with Jerry Goodman as the primary pilot, before McLaughlin rips into a pulverizing solo with Billy Cobham in tow. The unison playing here is thrilling. At times one can sense the musicians toying with each other. Despite McLaughlin's blazing speed and unpredictability, Cobham never misses a beat—another mind-blowing display of musical telepathy. This eventually becomes a delicate call and response with Hammer adding his gurgling mini-moog embellishments, before all converge and reinstate the song's theme, bringing it to a gloriously satisfying close nearly 20 minutes later.

download (mp3 @320 kbs):

uploaded yandex 4shared mega solidfiles zalivalka cloudmailru filecloudio

back