

Fanfare Ciocărlia Live

Asphalt Tango CDATR 2309

Full Price (CD 50 mins; DVD 151 mins)



Be warned: flammable contents!



This CD and DVD package is quite brilliant, although not altogether new.

I remember, when the DVD of the 2004 concert in Berlin was released, wondering why it hadn't been released as an album too. It's high-octane brass music played with an irrepressible energy for a delighted audience. There's an infectious mix of sonorous sounds, occasional vocal numbers and some whirlwind dance tunes – like 'Hurichestra', 'Tziganeasca' and the popular 'Nicoleta'. Over the past decade, Romania's Fanfare Ciocărlia have virtually become the brass equivalent of the spectacularly successful Taraf de Haidouks, with a series of great albums and popular international tours.

This live CD may not be as crisp and focused as Fanfare's best recordings (*Baro Biao – World Wide Wedding* is a favourite), but what you get in addition to the craziness of the Berlin concert is a DVD which includes both the live concert and a really classy film about the band: *Iag Bari – Brass on Fire*. It's not only a well-shot, quirky documentary about the musicians and their German producer Henry Ernst, but it makes imaginative filmic leaps. Most memorably there's a strange dream sequence in which pieces of gold are tipped out of the bell of a newly repaired baritone horn amidst a surreal graveyard of decaying brass instruments. It's a nice metaphor for this band and the hopes of so many Romanian musicians. Directed by Ralf Marschalleck, *Brass on Fire* is an exemplary piece of work. There are also other snippets and DVD extras which make this a great gift for anyone with a passion for the larger-than-life music of the Balkans.

Simon Broughton