

## Steve Vai - Real Illusions: Reflections (2005)

Written by bluesever

Tuesday, 02 June 2015 15:30 - Last Updated Saturday, 19 January 2019 20:40

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### Steve Vai - Real Illusions: Reflections (2005)



1. *Building The Church* (4:58) 2. *Dying For Your Love* (4:51) 3. *Glorious* (4:35) 4. *K'm-Pee-Du-Wee* (3:59) 5. *Firewall* (4:19) 6. *Freak Show Excess* (6:52) 7. *Lotus Feet* (6:44) 8. *Yai Yai* (2:37) 9. *Midway Creatures* (3:42) 10. *I'm Your Secrets* (4:26) 11. *Under It All* (8:08)  
- Steve Vai - guitars, vocals - Billy Sheehan - bass - Jeremy Colson – drums

For his first studio album in five years, Steve Vai came up with a "rock fable" described as follows: "Real Illusions: Reflections is the first part of a multilayered menagerie of vignettes based on the amplified mental exaggerations of a truth-seeking madman who sees the world... Oh, never mind." Sound advice there. Each tune has a description of the "story line" and further track-by-track description is available on Vai's website, but the reality is that the concept doesn't get in the way of the music on this largely instrumental offering. "Building the Church" is everything you'd expect right out of the gate: crunching heavy riffs and wild elastic soloing, but Vai's always been more interested in solid melodies and great attention to sonic detail and tone than he is in empty showboating. As a result, his playing is restrained and lyrical just as often as it is flashy, with the composition itself taking precedence over the soloing. He's got a great ear for arrangements, and can build a track with a thousand guitar parts or turn around and sound just as full with a single guitar, bass, and drums (as on the beautiful "K'm-Pee-Du-Wee"). He's also got a couple surprises: like getting funky with scatted mouth percussion and horn charts on "Firewall" or the amusing and experimental "Yai Yai," with its ticking clock rhythm and crazy talkbox work. "Freak Show Excess" (title says it all) is a wild guitar fest with cool electric sitar, and then there's "Lotus Feet," a live track taken from concerts Vai did with the Metropole Orkester (one of Europe's finest orchestras) in Holland in 2004. As a vocalist, he's gotten way more confident, and while it's doubtful his singing will ever be the primary attraction, he does a fine job here. The playing and production is fantastic, but it seems that with the different styles and feels (along with excellent pacing) Vai really tried to craft a solid album as opposed to a series of dazzling tracks and succeeded nicely. --- Sean Westergaard, allmusic.com

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