

REVIEWS

DREAM THEATER

**A Dramatic Turn of Events**

[Roadrunner]

Legions of Dream Theater fans were dismayed when drummer (and founding member) Mike Portnoy and the band parted ways last year. Never fear—with new drummer Mike Mangini behind the kit, the veteran prog-metal ensemble sounds re-energized, engaged and focused on songwriting in ways not heard since 2002's *Six Degrees of Inner Turbulence*. On the harder side of the ledger, songs such as “On the Backs of Angels” and “Breaking All Illusions” sport the usual storm-trooper beats, doomsday riffage and virtuosic solos—but melody trumps even the flashiest pyrotechnics. On the other hand, ballads such as the Queen-like “Far From Heaven” and the acoustic-guitar driven “Beneath the Surface” come off as islands of calm among the portentous lyrical themes and musical carnage. If there's one characteristic that's always elevated Dream Theater above its prog-rock peers, it's band chemistry. On *A Dramatic Turn of Events*, even after the trade of one Mike for another, that chemistry remains intact. —Russell Hall

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