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## Dead End Drive-In: Now Showing - Welcome To The Terrordome

Written by Gaz E  
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### Public Enemy - 'Welcome To The Terrordome: 20 Years of Rock, Rap and Revolution' (Wienerworld)

What worth can be found in Wienerworld's UK reissue of Robert Patton-Spruill's 2007 documentary on Public Enemy? Plenty. It might not be the definitive PE retrospective that the band is deserving of, but it certainly acts as a refresher to any music fan lapsing on the realization that Public Enemy are one of the most important bands of a generation, and should be forced upon those who have never grasped that notion previously.

The opening gambit of Rage Against The Machine's Tom Morello (the first talking head of a cast of many, including The Black Eyed Peas, Ice T, Anthrax's Scott Ian and Kom's Jonathan Davis), that his first taste of Public Enemy's debut album, 1987's 'Yo! Bum Rush The Show', had all the energy and excitement of the greatest hard rock show he'd ever been to is the only reminder any viewer should need in regards to this rightly lauded band being the most potent of outfits, musically. That he follows it up with talk of Chuck D being to hip hop what Bob Dylan was to rock and pop, in regards to thematically expanding the vernacular of modern music, showcases just how important the politics of Public Enemy were on a genre seemingly hell bent on becoming a caricature of itself with a legion of misogynistic pretenders waiting in the wings.

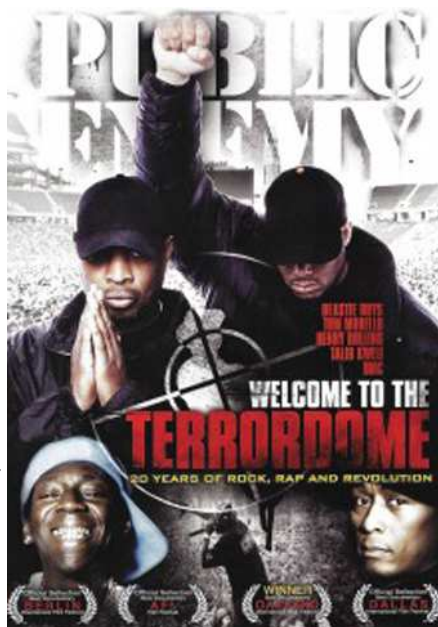
When Run DMC's Darryl "DMC" McDaniels tells you that his band were The Beatles in comparison to PE bring the Rolling Stones, you know that the attention offered in their collective direction is warranted. His claim that Public Enemy was/is a mix of punk, hip hop, hard rock and blues offers a rare insight into how the band's contemporaries rate what could have been viewed as fierce rivals.

That's hardly the case here though as all three Beastie Boys and Henry Rollins provide much of the celebrity back-slapping, with the emphasis on genuine respect and affection for the band rather than bought-on self-publicising so common in the modern documentary.

Rollins talks passionately about being given a Public Enemy tape by Minor Threat/Fugazi's Ian Mackaye and then of a mutual love-in - in an artistic sense, of course - with Chuck D at a music festival, a suitably rib-tickling Flavour Flav anecdote following quickly. And it is the

more "fun" side of Public Enemy that will surprise a lot of people when watching this film: Flav's refusal to give D a collection of early tapes for digital transfer as they are residing in a much safer place - inside a pillow case in his mom's basement; the band attempting to stop London traffic to get a photograph on the (almost in the correct location) zebra crossing on Abbey Road; the band posing for a picture at the rear of a London bus, all imposing rap shapes thrown, as said vehicle drives away. This is the side of the political outfit that few will have seen, and appreciated viewing it will become to all those taking the digital versatile disc plunge.

The plethora of film festival award icons slapped across the (decidedly cool, it has to be said) cover art are not there by accident: this is a fine piece of work that captures an important band still deeply engrossed in its art, filmed at the time that Public Enemy was celebrating two decades in the business. The live footage - from the UK, US, Russia, Brazil, Italy and Spain - is as cool as you can imagine, but it is the candid, behind the scenes content that really impresses: the



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- Uber Rock at Sonisphere 2014 - Michael McKeegan and Neil Cooper - Therapy? - Interview Exclusive
- Steelhouse Festival - Aberbeeg, Hafod-Y-Dafal Farm - Sunday, 20th July 2014
- Ace Frehley - 'Space Invader' (Steamhammer / SPV)



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Spirytus - 'Self Titled' (Bullet Ride Records)

Fyeld - 'Not Blonde Enough To Survive The Holocaust' (Self Released)

Spiridion - 'A Moment Of Clarity' (Self Released)

Earthtone9 - 'Inside, Embers Glow...' (Self Released)

Melodrome - 'Flood' (Soultube Music)

Arcadia - 'Roy Philip Nohl' (Self Released)

band members playing basketball in the shadow of a huge outdoor stage set-up; Flav admitting that his car got towed away from a parking facility due to the non-paying of fees. These show a human side to a band projected onto the pop culture backdrop like superheroes. Let them not take away, though, the political impact that Public Enemy had, and continues to have, on the music world.

The only downside to this film is the footage of the idiotic Tim Westwood, whose fake "urban" voice mysteriously changes when he's caught in candid footage and not presenting his radio show, with Chuck D as a guest. Compare his tones to those of the Beastie Boys - whiter than white, yet genuine, the real thing, and bona fide legends for it.


It's a minor complaint, though, for 'Welcome To The Terrordome' (presented here in its full 108 minute form complete with standard bonus features - trailer, text PE history and discography) is well worth a couple of hours of your time and a tenner or so. Until the definitive Public Enemy documentary comes along, this will do nicely.



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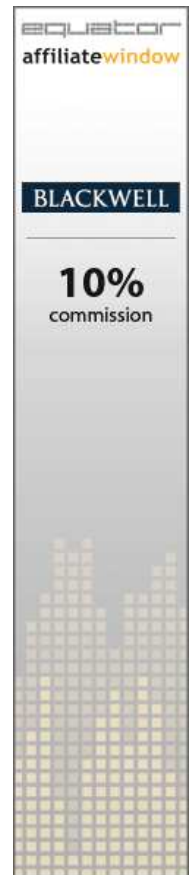
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