

DVD REVIEWS

Seven Witches Years Of The Witch Screaming Ferret



That Jack Frost is one busy gentleman. In addition to issuing his own solo albums and appearing on a landslide of tribute records, the New Jersey-based guitar hero has appeared alongside the likes of Savatage, Metalium, Seven Witches, Bronx Casket Co., Speed and Frostbite. Out of all the aforementioned acts though, Seven Witches is one that probably is held closest to the guitarist's heart, as it's been his baby since its 1998 inception. With a style highly reminiscent of '80s-era Priest and Maiden, Seven Witches has endured countless lineup changes, yet continue to rack up albums and tours, and recently, issue their first-ever live DVD, *Years Of The Witch*. Featuring former Hades singer Alan Tecchio, the performance offers highlights from all phases of Seven Witches' career. You won't be able to fault the group's straight-up-power-metal performance, but the actual product has a few faults. First off, it would've been helpful to list such tiny tidbits as, y'know, the venue or date this performance occurred. Or even better yet, how about the band members' names? Also, the actual footage at times comes off like a high school video project (the same image breaking into multiples on the screen for example). And while we're on the subject of "high school," you can't help but think that such song titles as "Metal Tyrant" and "Mental Messiah" would've sounded splendid as part of your band's "Battle Of The Bands" performance... back in '85. Additionally, you'll be in awe of Tecchio's bold fashion sense — wearing what looks like a black "flasher's jacket" as well as black spandex gloves that go up to his elbows. Despite the DVD's shortcomings, all should be forgiven for longtime admirers when they get to the multitude of bonus bits, including a "Story Of The Witch" history lesson and "Archive Concert Footage." [www.sevenwitches.net] — Greg Prato

The Dwarves FEFU: The DVD MVD



Sex! Blood! Horror! Female dominance! If you weren't hip to the godlike status of this band of mutants to begin with, you probably won't understand what got people so excited about them in the first place. Twenty years after these guys mutated from a paisleycore garage band to late-model punks to their present incarnation (pseudo-industrial shock rockers), *FEFU: The DVD* (in the special edition director's cut, yet) serves both as a retrospective and a valedictory note to The Dwarves' importance. Yet it's difficult to tell, in retrospect, why we should have paid them any attention.

True, the DVD has *Suicide Girls*. But so does that Probot video with Lemmy and Wino ("Shake Your Blood"). It has archival footage from late-'80s performances in which Dwarves frontman Blog Dahlia incites to riot and cultivates audience mayhem. But there's more and better mayhem on your average MTV reality show. It has horror iconography and splatter-film nods. But wait — doesn't everybody? The trouble with The Dwarves is their lack of a single driving perspective beyond frat boy atavism, which is much more entertaining in *The Wedding Crashers* or *Old School*. Why watch this softcore when you can see the 1993 GG Allin documentary *Hated*, in which the singer spatters the audience with his own feces? In some ways this DVD feels like a real-life documentary à la *This Is Spinal Tap*, the difference being that unlike their simulated metal brethren, The Dwarves are so-so musicians and lack the advantage of being fictitious. [www.thedwarves.com] — Alex S. Johnson

Kamelot One Cold Winter's Night Steamhammer



Watching music DVDs often feels like an unnecessary thing to do, especially if said band actively tours. Kamelot's *One Cold Winter's Night* has all the basics — live footage, interviews, videos, a photo gallery — but most of the features seem pretty lackluster. The interview portion offers interviews with guitarist Thomas Youngblood, drummer Casey Grillo and keyboardist Oliver Palotai. Now, I'm not very tech savvy. I don't care what kind of suped-up guitar ESP gave you (sorry, Youngblood) or how many cymbals you might add to your drum kit for the upcoming tour. My ADD set in with this segment and I found myself analyzing wallpaper in the background rather than finding interest in what the guys had to say. This section could've been interesting, but with each member having so little to say, it came off as rather uneventful.

The live section, filmed in Oslo, Norway, gave me mixed feelings as well. While there were an abundance of songs (18 to be exact), the drab colors and artsy camera angles — constant panning in and out and the dreaded 360 shot — ruined it. However, not all of the live footage was a washout. "March Of Mephisto" was carried out perfectly with a dramatic interaction between Kamelot mainman Roy Kahn and Epica maven Simone Simon. And what Kamelot performance would be complete without a dynamic performance, once again, between Khan and Simon in "The Haunting?" One of my favorites off *The Black Halo*, it's also the best performance on the DVD. However, we could've done without the pointless between-song image clips, such as the desert shots before "Nights Of Arabia."

Although you can watch anything on YouTube, it's become a bit of a treat to watch high quality videos every now and again. Disc two features a bevy of Kamelot videos including three versions of "March Of Mephisto" (an edited and unedited edition and a live at Stockholm version), "The Haunting" (and the "Making Of") and "Serenade." All in all though, *One Cold Winter's Night* falls a bit flat on my scale. Pick it up if you're a Kamelot fanatic or a maniacal DVD collector. If not, pass go and collect \$200. [www.kamelot.com] — Chrissy Eyes

Dolla Morte Bill Zebub Productions



The latest in a long line of off-end-rama jaunts by the off-kilter Jersey filmmaker, *Dolla Morte* finds Bill Zebub yet again exploring the nether regions of the human gross-out tolerance, only this time with dolls. Yes, dolls. Hence the title.

There are advantages and disadvantages to using dolls in cinema. They're posable; that's a plus. Like the action figure of the Pope squatting on the back cover on the DVD next to the blurb, "should you buy this DVD? Does the pope sh*t in the woods?" It's probably not something you could get the real Pope to be a part of. Another advantage.

Plus, all that impaling, lighting on fire and drowning would probably put a special effects budget through the roof, so, taking the Zebubian doll approach, all one has to do is impale, light on fire and drown the dolls. Works much better and comes off even more twisted than it might otherwise (though the crucified, naked female dolls with their over-the-top pubic hair might be more humorous on film than necessarily intended).

Still, it's hard not to enjoy *Dolla Morte*, at least for the concept behind it if not for the film itself. Stop-motion technology is replaced by hands hidden (not always) off-camera as Zebub's usual stable of performers provide voiceovers like you might if you were playing with action figures, which, essentially, they are.

As per usual, if racist, homophobic, anti-religious or sexist humor offends you, you probably won't get it and you probably shouldn't try. For the rest, this is thoroughly recommended. [www.billzebug.com] — JJ Koczan

Various Artists The Realm Of Napalm Records Napalm



Yes, Napalm Records does offer more than female-fronted goth metal bands. If you still think Napalm's only calling card is promo shots of voluptuous femmes with five average looking dudes, then it's time to leave that rock you've been hiding under. This collection of videos and live footage from the Napalm stable only goes to further the notion that the label has become pretty solid and well-rounded. Of course, the addition of Týr and the emergence of Leaves' Eyes, Lacrimas Profundere and Battlelore can't hurt matters either, but their glutton standard goth metal bands (Beseech, Sinamore, Elis etc.) are a lot better than anyone else's.

The videos on this compilation range from the typical (Hurtlocker's "Absolution") to the animated (Beseech's "Innerlane") to the Tolkienesque (Battlelore's "Storm Of The Blade"). The quality of each cut varies, especially in Týr's "Regin Smidur" which is nothing more than footage of a Viking battle reenactment, but serves its purpose nonetheless. Napalm's top act, Leaves' Eyes get special treatment, as a behind the scenes look at the making of their latest opus, *The Vinland Saga*, is included, in addition to backstage footage of their Mexican and Russian tours.

We'll forget that a segment on German cock rockers Wig Wam was even included (how did these guys end up on Napalm?) and acknowledge the overall thoroughness of this compilation. At 19 videos, eight live cuts, behind the scenes action and a bonus audio CD, this is what most labels should do if they fear being pigeonholed by the industry. One has to think Napalm did. Nice to see they did something about it. [www.napalmrecords.com]

— David E. Gehlke

Bad Brains Live At CBGB: 1982 MVD



The Bad Brains' story would make a classic Hollywood movie in the same vein as Oscar Winning hits like *Roy* and *Walk The Line*. Not only did this all-African American outfit destroy stereotypes and shatter boundaries for other aspiring African American musicians from all walks of life and genres, they were hardcore punk pioneers who exposed reggae to new audiences. Yes, they've maintained a tenuous existence at best; perpetually ready to fly apart like a poorly kept jalopy. And you can find a photo of their frontman, the legendary and charismatic HR, in the dictionary next to the term "Free Spirit." After suffering legal woes, the band was forced to tour and record under a different name, "Soul Brains," for a few years. Eventually, history will remember Bad Brains for their classics, their impact on extreme forms of rock music and the multitude of artists they've influenced. (These guys have influenced some of the artists who you read about each month in the pages of this magazine as well as artists you'll likely never read about in *Metal Maniacs*, like The Red Hot Chili Peppers and No Doubt.)

Recently unearthed by MVD Visual, *Live At CBGB: 1982* is a real gem that captures the band at the height of their popularity performing in the capitol of hardcore and punk: CBGBs in NYC. In addition to Bad Brains' Christmas Eve 1982 concert, which finds the band performing classics like "I," "Riot Squat" and of course, "Pay To Cum," longtime fans of the band will also love the bonus material, which includes a poignant interview from '82.

This is a snapshot; our chance to look back and experience a historic musical event. And lest we forget, CBGB's was forced to shut its doors for the final time a few months ago. [www.badbrains.com] — Vinny Cecolini

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