

## AURAL ASSAULTS DVD REVIEWS

### Diamond Head To The Devil His Due MVD



If there were any justice, legendary NWBHM band Diamond Head's debut, *Lightning To The Nations*, would be spoken of in the same revered tones as Volume 4, *Zoso*, *Master Of Puppets* and *Rainbow's Rising*. While the album possesses a prominent place in many a headbanger's heart, it's a real tragedy that more people seem to know more about Metallica's cover of "Am I Evil" than the actual band from which said classic was lifted.

*Lightning* is a perfect example of stone cold perfection, if there ever was such a thing. From the electrifying title track to the closing strains of "Helpless," there's a reason why Metallica started out performing no less than four covers off the album during their earliest gigs. Alas, however, time has not been too kind to the Diamond Head legacy, as egos and subpar follow-up material (*Canterbury*, anyone?) effectively killed the group prior to 1993's promising *Death And Progress* comeback, an album that featured contributions from both Dave Mustaine and Tony Iommi.

Bad luck struck again, however, when frontman Sean Harris left the fold. Having been lucky enough to witness Harris and guitarist Brian Tatler together at the New Jersey Metal Meltdown one year, I was struck as to how vital the band still sounded, and wondered if it was even possible to replace such an inimitable voice and charisma.

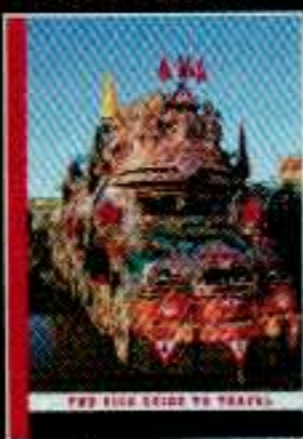
*To The Devil His Due*, the band's first official DVD release, showcases Tatler's version of Diamond Head (he being the sole remaining founding member) headlining London's Astoria, this time fronted by relative unknown throat Nick Tart. To Tart's credit, the voice is there, as well as a commanding and accommodating stage presence. However Harris' boots are big boots to fill and I couldn't help wondering throughout this 14-song set how it would've sounded with all four original Diamond Headers kickin' out the jams.

With a relatively unexciting rhythm section and second guitar player backing him up, it quickly becomes apparent that this is Tatler's show, and his alone. That's not to say that the man doesn't know what fans want to hear, as the set is peppered with almost every song from *Lightning To The Nations* with only "Sweet And Innocent" unaired. More recent tunes from 2005's promising *All Will Be Revealed* are also performed and to a decent response, though the true riot occurs during the closing triumvirate of "Helpless," "Am I Evil" and "In The Heat Of The Night" off the band's underrated sophomore effort, *Borrowed Time*.

Well shot with numerous crowd and band angles and a powerful sound, *To The Devil His Due* provides enough bang for your buck with some legitimately engaging interviews with Tatler, Tart and drummer Karl Wilcox, as well as a peak into the studio process with Tatler and bassist Eddie Moohan. Head fanatics will want to get their hands on this one, for sure, as it may be a while before you get to see these true pioneers of British heavy metal on these shores any time soon.

[www.diamond-head.net] — MetalGeorge Pacheco

### The Vice Guide To Travel Vice Films



Mini media empire *Vice* publishes regional editions of its namesake magazine in major metropolitan areas worldwide, plus runs a record label and website. Broadly speaking, it's safe to say these efforts more or less gained *Vice* its rep as ironic tastemakers by alternately promoting and satirizing a stereotypical party-monster hipster lifestyle, something that seems to elicit applause or revulsion in amounts roughly equal to how seriously people takes the schtick, or at least how much coke they do.

There's a lot of knee-jerk sarcasm involved in all that stuff, not to mention a streak of contrarianism that's borderline puerile, and if you don't have a taste for that approach (or just find *Vice's* application of it rote or tiresome, which it often is), it can be easy to write all that shit off. Which would be a shame, because mixed in among the throwaway gags found in running features such as their hilariously inconsistent (and, frequently, cheaply insulting) *Fashion Dos and Don'ts* is a refreshing approach to journalism.

This *Vice Guide To Travel* DVD is a perfect example. Here, various *Vice* founders, employees and associates travel the world checking in on a variety of interesting, fucked-up and scary locales, including an organization for Palestinian kids that grooms them to be suicide bombers (while fully ganking the traditional Boy Scouts name and symbol, of all things), a visit with a Bulgarian arms dealer casually discussing the sale of bombs that could pretty much take out your favorite big city (one's buried in the dude's mom's yard), dropping in on the blue-eyed, blonde-haired and terrifyingly inbred descendents of Nazis in the jungles of Paraguay, a stroll around the gun markets of Pakistan and a drunken hunting trip to the blazingly radioactive wasteland surrounding Chernobyl.

For some, the breezy tone and lack of in-depth or traditional reporting in these short pieces might be a drawback, but what at first might seem superficial, or even irresponsible, is actually pretty groundbreaking and cool. This is journalism without the assumption of authority — no talking heads purporting to be experts, no dramatic build-ups or ominous music, little attempts to manipulate the audience. It's as different from how you'd see these topics handled by traditional news outlets as can be imagined. Instead of tedious prefab video packages, multi-night "special events" designed to pop ratings and a lot of music and editing techniques intended to make viewers feel like the apocalypse is right around the corner, you get five-to-ten-minute vignettes featuring a handful of funny dudes, the same types of guys like you'd see at your favorite dive bars or record stores, strolling around and occasionally going, "whoah, that's fucked up."

The other thing that struck me about this DVD is that it offers glimpses of lives in places like the Congo or the most dangerous slums of Brazil that are presented in the same way they're lived: As perfectly normal. The conditions people live in all over the world in places like these may be fucked up when compared to the comforts enjoyed by developed countries, but for the people actually there it's just fucking day-to-day life. I can learn a lot more about the world from a few brief, honest depictions of real people living real lives than from hours and hours of heavy-handed news-factory spin. [www.vice.com] — Patrick Hughes

### Crowbar Live: With Full Force Candlelight



"Tune low, play slow." That's the theory behind New Orleans' kings of doomcore. Rewind to July 4th, 2004 at the With Full Force Festival in Leipzig, Germany. Led by founding member, vocalist/guitarist Kirk Windstein, Crowbar take the stage on an overcast Sunday afternoon at 3:15 pm, playing an eight-song set. Although the show is almost three years old, this DVD was just released in February 2007. And due to the fact that this gig was performed prior to the release of the band's latest album, issued in February 2005, only one song from *Lifesblood For The Downtrodden* is performed, that being "New Dawn." Better late than never is certainly appropriate when it comes to this DVD.

Presented in a format similar to that utilized by VH1 on their *Behind The Music* specials, a narrator guides the viewer through the band's history. The live footage is interspersed with interview segments featuring Kirk as well as Eyehategod guitarist Jimmy Bower — who used to drum for Crowbar and currently drums alongside the old man in Down. Hatebreed's Jamey Jasta also gets some camera time as he just happens to be Kirk's cohort in Kingdom Of Sorrow. Offstage footage includes the usual joking around, in addition to brief but chilling scenes of the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in Crowbar's home state of Louisiana. Bonus features are comprised of the band's six promo videos: "Subversion," "Existence Is Punishment," "All I Had (I Gave)," "The Only Factor," "Dead Sun" and the previously unavailable "Slave No More." At the end of it all, what comes through loud and clear is the fact that Crowbar makes music out of sheer love of the craft. They don't do it for the money, 'cause they certainly aren't raking it in. This band exists solely to create solid tunes. [www.crowbarmusic.com] — Aaron Small

### Various Artists Obscene Extreme Festival 2005: Silence Sucks Obscene Productions



I always get asked why I enjoy attending fests. The reasons are many: The opportunity to see a bunch of bands I want to see or check out all in one place; sets are shorter which, in my book, is a good thing; plus, if a band is stinking up the joint, they're only doing so for half the time they normally would. There's also the added plus of hanging out with friends, hitting up merch, discovering a band or two that I'd never heard of previously or experiencing that handful of bands who are able to bring it live, even if their music leaves a lot to be desired. Watching a fest at home on DVD, on the other hand, is not something I can say I look forward to as much. The atmosphere of my living room just doesn't cut it.

This recorded document of 2005's Extreme Obscene Festival in the Czech Republic (which culls together the best and the worst of grind, gore-grind, D-beat hardcore and death metal) is six-and-a-half hours long, which means it took me about three weeks to watch — including skipping over the absolutely terrible likes of Patologicum, Professor Lefebvre, Deflorace, Mindsnare and one of the worst bands I've ever had the displeasure of seeing and hearing, Amoebic Dysentery. Included here are snippets from the sets of 45 bands, back stage (actually, back room) interviews and some body piercing performance art from Hell.cz, which according to their website is a body piercing/modification and tattoo salon in Prague. Some of the more name acts included here are Pungent Stench, Regurgitate, Avulsed, Haemorrhage (who put in a hilarious, blood splattered performance), Leng Tch'e, Disfear, the awesome Sayyadina and crowd-molesting, urinating freaks, Blood Düster. Other top notch performances come from the unknown likes of Malkavian, Bombstrike, Diskonto, Guided Cradle, C.O.S. and Icelandic grind quintet, Forgarðour Helvitis (all members of which commit a huge fashion faux-pas by sporting their own band shirts for two days). The video quality is surprisingly clean considering it was captured in the rain and mud via digital handcams, though the sound leaves a lot to be desired. Sometimes it's the fault of some of the drum machines and poor sounding death metal and gore-grind bands; other times it's because the sound appears to be taken directly from the camera-captured audio. [www.obsce.cz]

— Kevin Stewart-Panko