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REVIEW

Music DVD Review: Lydia Lunch - *Video Hysterie: 1978-2006*

Written by [David L. Miller](#)

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Known for her violent, orgasmic spoken word performances and the twisted characters she portrays in R. Kern's short films, Lydia Lunch is perhaps the scariest, and sexiest, artist you're likely to be exposed to.

With the release of *Video Hysterie: 1978-2006*, Lunch lovingly subjects her fans to the aforementioned orgasmic rants set to a disarmingly raw punk soundtrack. The DVD explodes with a fast-paced montage of death and destruction via black-and-white stock footage of wars, suicides, executions, and explosions.

The band, Teenage Jesus and the Jerks, chaotically paints over the footage with ear-splitting screams of the lead guitar, the rampant heavy thud of the drum beats, and, finally, you have Lunch screaming herself into a psychotic frenzy. You can't understand what she's saying in the song, but there wouldn't be that amazing, soul-stirring punk rock edge if you could.

After the frenetic opening, the DVD jump cuts to blurry, home video quality footage (circa 1970s) of a Teenage Jesus and the Jerks concert. No frills here, just a single camera, single-angle setup that pans back-and-forth from the bassist to the drummer to Lunch.

With her monotone wailing, Lunch plows through songs such as "I Woke Up Screaming," "Freud in Flop," and "Race Mixing" as if she's yelling a sermon to the audience, not caring in the slightest whether they like it not. Of course, she's a hot punk rock chick, so they lap up her verbal abuse with their desperate applause.

It's hard to tell if Lunch's stop-motion guitar playing is intentional for dramatic effect, or if it's due to lack of experience. Fortunately, the bassist, perfectly stoic except for his energetic manipulation of the chords, takes up the slack that Lunch, and even the drummer, leave hanging.

In the next segment, with the band 8-Eyed Spy, Lunch has relinquished her guitar playing duties to a dude in Hawaiian shirt who deftly abuses his Fender. And, as if that wasn't enough, he occasionally drops his guitar to rock out on a saxophone.

Musically, 8-Eyed is far more energetic than Teenage Jesus..., yet it's apparent that Lunch's poetic droll is responsible for slowing the band down when it can definitely rock out. Both are appealing in their own right, so perhaps this conflicted emotion is what Lunch desired.

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David Miller was born in Lawton, Oklahoma and now lives in Norman, Oklahoma. He is pursuing a professional writing degree at the University of Oklahoma.



Comments

