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## Stryper – Live In Indonesia at the Java Rockin' Land (Wienerworld)

by PAUL MADDISON on Feb 20, 2013 • 3:05 pm

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People will look at the band name and immediately form a particular opinion, but love them or ridicule them, Stryper were and are (having reformed in 2005) a valid, genuine heavy metal band. Their lyrical content may not be to everyone's taste, but neither is pounding a person up the arse with an electric drill and those lyrical genius' are thought of as cool...go figure?! Whatever you believe, music is music, but to have an informed opinion you have to give all sides of the coin a chance right? So with an open mind I continue to watch...ha... who am I kidding...Stryper were one of my favourite bands at school so I relished the chance to review this DVD (with a weird, long title) that was supplied courtesy of Wienerworld PR.

What I immediately find rather amusing are the fans in the crowd throwing the devil horns...to this Christian metal band...hmm (I stroke my chin!). The stage and setting is a huge festival (with a useless big screen showing nothing of any relevance apart from general advertising and the band name in standard font), and my only main criticism of this DVD is that it is purely the concert, there are no extras or features. I would have liked a bit of info about the festival, from the band maybe in an interview or something, but no, this is a lost opportunity I feel. So with such vast space available on the DVD disc, we continue with the good old VHS a-kin format. Now speaking of VHS tapes, my copy of Stryper 'Live In Japan' has long been mothballed (as I don't have anything to play it on anymore!) but there are some pleasant similarities to that old tape. Robert Sweet stills plays his drums with his side to the audience, but not as angled as they used to be. The band still personally adorn yellow and black clothing, though thankfully the big hair and spandex has gone (Micheal Sweet comments on this too). What has not gone is Stryper's ability to sing in harmony, play guitar solos in harmony and generally play the music just like on record, live on stage. Opener 'Sing-a-Long Song' was never a decent track or favourite of mine, but this is where you see the contribution of bassist Timothy Gaines and guitarist Oz Fox, they have a big part to play in the vocals. I previously touched upon guitar solo harmonies between vocalist Michael Sweet and Oz Fox, this is perfectly represented on 'Murder By Pride' which is the title track to their second release as part of their comeback in 2009. Some guitar techniques I remember being rather popular in the 80's have disappeared of late in the modern scene, Stryper still manage to include them without contributing to any lesser sound or degree of heaviness.


'Loud 'N' Clear' is an early classic, what is annoying here is Michael Sweet stopping the track to try to get the crowd to sing a long; this just pisses me off, just like a drum solo, just get on with it! The crowd are very much subdued compared to that aforementioned Japanese VHS tape and I don't see the band throwing bibles into the crowd either...I guess the authorities might say something about that considering where they are playing! Timothy Gaines shows much facial enjoyment as these tracks are belted out and speaking of bass lines, with such amazing sound and visuals captured on this DVD, the bass lines in certain parts of 'More Than A Man' actually coincide with UFO's 'Lights Out', I am sure, if not I am drunk and crazy! 'Calling On You' was a b-side to 'Free', both are aired here and this really brings back memories for me as this was one of the first metal 12 inch singles I bought, the tracks still have that edge I liked back then and the harmonies are also as good as they ever were, although Michael Sweet does performs some notes in a lower register (Jon Bon Jovi is also noted for doing this lately). Sweet saves his voice for the big notes which are still met and still belted out.

The crowd up to this point have been rather sedate, the ballad 'Honestly' finally awakens the crowd but actually sends me to sleep. I love the song, but not at a live gig, I preferred their ballad 'First Love' anyway! Also at this point the camera crew finally change their view and pan around a bit, now you really see the expanse and the size of the crowd these US gents are playing too, this is very big and it also looks very

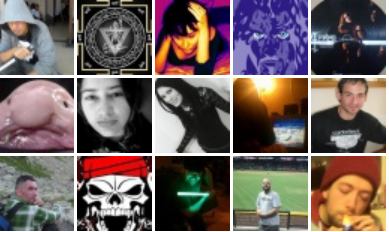
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controlled too with definitive crowd separation clearly visible by guards in between, like the Moscow Peace Festival VHS I seem to remember. 'All For One' showcases vocal harmonies again, for me this was the stand out track from the 'Against the Law' album, an album that sadly started to see the demise of Stryper's popularity and for this genre in general. You have to remember, that in 1990 Thrash was king, there was little room for sentiment and the metal media, both magazines and MTV, started to wain their interest in such bands. They and both sub-genres had a good couple more years to go however before everything was buried by grunge! In retrospect, 'Against the Law' was a slight change in direction that I appreciate more now than I did back then, people don't like change and bands suffer criminally sometimes for this, how maturing a little bit changes your mind in hindsight, but I still think it's predecessor 'In God We Trust' was very much a pop metal album aimed at going more mainstream.

So returning to the DVD, an ego ramp is built, it's used once during 'The Way' and this leads you onto the final two tracks, their encores and probably their most recognisable tracks 'To Hell With the Devil' and 'Soldiers Under Command'. The latter is still one of my favourites, the guitar work is great and I feel this band are still kicking ass live.

With modern sound and vision technology, you can expect nothing short of amazement in terms of picture quality, camera angles and the recorded sound. The DVD is an up close and personal live document to a pretty large concert from 2010. As I mentioned earlier, there is nothing else apart from the 60-70 minute concert but at a fair price, this is worth it. Stryper will release a new album this year, mainly consisting of re-recordings; this DVD is a worthy addition to your Stryper collection.

As for Stryper...The Yellow and Black Attack are certainly entertaining and this DVD documents a real competent set of musicians who are very much unduly chastised for their past stereotypes and individual beliefs ahead of their vast musical ability as songwriters.

**Paul Maddison**

<http://www.stryper.com>  
[www.wienerworld.com](http://www.wienerworld.com)

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SPENNY says:  
Feb 21, 2013

The horned hand is an old gesture to ward off evil, not hail Satan, as any Dio fan should know [http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sign\\_of\\_the\\_horns#section\\_1](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sign_of_the_horns#section_1)

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PAUL MADDISON says:  
Feb 25, 2013

It also has a variety of meanings in heavy metal subcultures not just this and the one you mention.

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