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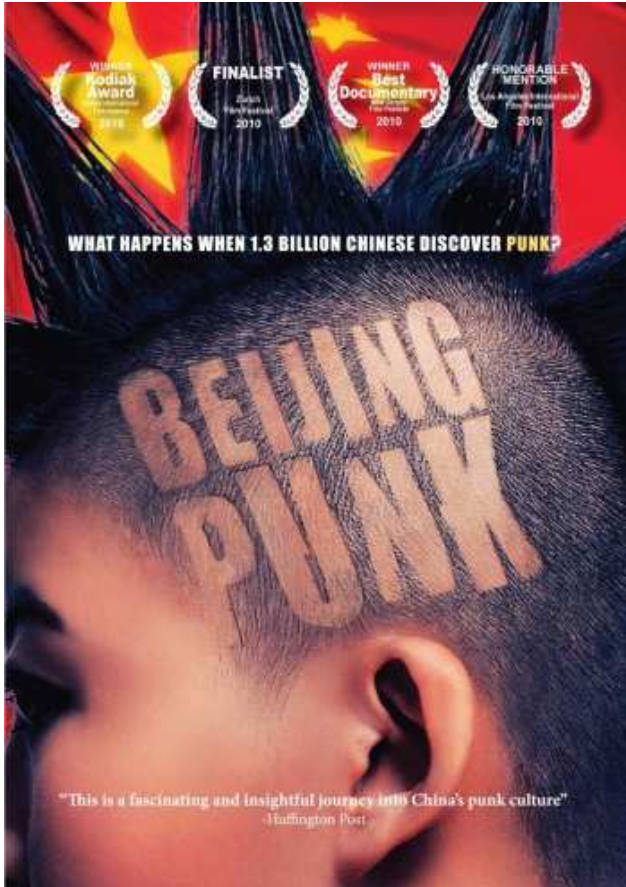
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REVIEWS: BEIJING PUNK - [FILM]



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Now Playing: 'T.Z. Generation' by Demerit

TITLE: Beijing Punk - [Film]
directed by Shaun M. Jefford
LABEL: It's Time! Entertainment/Seminal Films
DATE: 12-08-12

REVIEW BY: Bill Adams

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Some statements manage to be provocative and inspiring without much effort at all. Like what would you do if someone yelled "Fire" in a full movie theater while you were trying to watch a film? What would your response be if you happened to find a lottery ticket on the street and you picked it up on a whim, and then discovered it was a winner when you took it to a convenience store? The possible outcomes of situations like that are endless and exciting because, while no one is sure what, *something* is going to happen. The images which manifest from the possibility of such situations occurring are intoxicating.

So what images come to mind when someone asks, "What happens when 1.3 billion Chinese discover punk?" like the cover of this *Beijing Punk* documentary. Where does your mind go at that suggestion? To images of the largest riot in the streets ever to occur in human history? Directions like that are exactly where Western minds go as one tries to imagine what the documentary *Beijing Punk* is all about. In fact, it is a story of the birth of an all-new scene in China; it is the story of a new generation steamrolling over the old one and inserting its own values over the previous set. It lays out the make-up of an all-new and fertile ground on which punk is now poised to grow, and the first punks, skinheads to appear as well as the Westerners who have come to the largest country on Earth to play midwife to the scene and help stoke the wildfire.

In watching *Beijing Punk*, the efforts made by those promoters, venues and performers have not been in vain. Groups like Joyside, No Party People and Demerit (to name only a few) are actively perpetuating a vibrant and unique scene quite unlike any other punk rock center in the world. Because it has no real roots but the ability to recognize the elements in the music which apply to their own societal situation, the anger is real and not just an English version of what they've seen elsewhere in the world; it is heart and soul as much as it is scene and sensationalism.

Because the societal situation in China sits as it does within the country (if they don't work sixty hours a week, many people are poor, China is not a democracy and there is a significant divide between generations of people) it's hard not to feel as though those viewing *Beijing Punk* aren't

also watching history repeat. As the camera and crew follow the different bands around Beijing during the Olympic games in 2010, viewers will notice that some images seem familiar. Depending on the moment, images similar to those of The Bowery in New York in the late 1970s reflect on the silver studs affixed to leather jackets on the streets of Thingzhou, while the alleyways and avenues if the East Bay in the Nineties are visible as the camera perches high atop the roof of a highrise apartment scheme. These images are similar to those which have already been captured in other locales in other decades, but they are not the same. Even so, watching them reappear here is exciting because viewers almost get the sense that they know how the story will go, and all that needs to happen is the right band has to nudge the climate in Beijing just the right way, and the world will be rocked by another of the same sort of waves which came out of New York and the East Bay – except this one will be Made In China.

That might sound uninspired – like the punk coming out of Beijing is nothing more than a second rate interpretation of the groundbreaking stuff which broke out of the West – but nothing could be further from the truth. Throughout interviews with members of the bands on the scene, it becomes pretty apparent that no band is blatantly trying to model itself after anyone else directly; these bands have their own problems and their own world view which is certainly similar to the sorts which inspired punk in the U.S. and U.K (when mention of the salary that one singer's father brings in – the gentleman's a doctor – is revealed to be around four hundred dollars a week, there's no question that money's tight), but not the same. That similarity makes the film accessible, but the differences between it and any punk rock doc that has been made before make it compelling.

Artist:

www.beijingpunk.com/

www.facebook.com/beijingpunk

DVD:

Beijing Punk is out now. Buy it here on [Amazon](#).

