



BEIJING PUNK (DVD) – MVD

60/100

This DVD was filmed on the eve of the 2008 Olympics with the intention of looking for something other than the games. Beijing Punk is an attempt by Australian filmmaker Shaun Jefford to search for an underground scene, if it exists at all, in Beijing. A brief search around Beijing shops yields little until he stumbles upon a club, the D-22, owned not by a Chinese but by Michael Pettis, an American! Even the booking (and record label) manager is not a Chinese national. This oddity runs counter to the perception that foreigners, nevermind nationals, are highly restricted and scrutinized by local officials. Several bands, Demerit, The Gar and Mi San Dao just to name a few, are featured with random concert footage. All lyrics sung during the footage are captioned and/or translated to English to provide a good deal of context and reference. Interviews with Demerit and Mi San Dao form the main part of this DVD and it features the 'leader'/singer of the latter, Lei Jun, most. His English is better than one might expect and he is a very candid, self proclaimed skin head who is not afraid to talk about all aspects of life. In many ways he is very much a stereotypical punk, drinks questionable 'syrups' often, has two bulldogs, often watches bootleg Motorhead videos and reveals some, let's just say unusual, opinions about Hitler. The aforementioned record label, Maybe Mars, supports bands like Demerit who claim to be real punk, have no interest in working and are from a bad area, a war zone as they call it, where sound of gunshots seem common. Trials and tribulations of being in a band and not bothering with the rules is the main theme of Beijing Punk. It features surprising - in both similarities and dissimilarities to western life - imagery of young bands, young men and occasionally their female fans, all living outside and against the system. Club D-22 has since closed after almost six years in existence. - Anna Tergel