

By Gary Dretzka

### Beijing Punk

The more one learns about China – four decades after Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger stopped there for take-out — the more fascinating it becomes. It seems as if a documentary maker need only poke the lens of his camera into a shaded corner to find something new and, often, in direct contradiction to what we've assumed since Tiananmen Square. Should we be surprised that there's a flourishing punk scene in a country that's portrayed as being so rigidly controlled? Probably, no more so than what we discovered about the rock-music scene in Tehran in "No One Knows About Persian Cats." What makes "**Beijing Punk**" so interesting is how the people we meet deal with everything from getting high on codeine to advocating personal freedom in their music, while avoiding overtly political lyrics. Shaun Jefford's film was made coincidental to the lead-up to the 2008 Olympics, which dominated all media and government activities. If there's an overly familiar vibe running through "Beijing Punk," it's only because every emerging pop-cultural trend shares common scene. It's likewise important to remember how isolated these musicians and their fans must feel in such a regimented environment, especially now that they have access to music and fashions from around the world. The music is pretty good, even by comparison to that produced in countries with a strong musical heritage. If the lyrics, often song in English, sound clichéd and dated, the sentiments behind them are universal and, in some ways, thrilling, — *Gary Dretzka*

<http://moviecitynews.com/2012/11/the-dvd-wrapup-mib3-lawless-slaughter-ales-beijing-punk-ike-tina-call-the-midwife-more/>