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'PUNK'S NOT DEAD' DVD

This brilliant documentary starts at the beginning of the punk rock movement, on through the second wave, through the hardcore years, the difficult, barren early '90's and right up to the commercialisation of punk with hugely successful punk rock bands breaking into the mainstream. It's a very exciting ride that nobody could have predicted – here was this sudden, youth attack that people thought would self-destruct over night, thirty years later bearing one on the biggest selling and most successful bands on the planet, GREEN DAY. Now, a lot of people would question whether bands like GREEN DAY, THE OFFSPRING, MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE, GOOD CHARLOTTE, SUM 41 etc are punk rock and that's up for debate but with some of them, their roots certainly are set in punk rock stone. At one time some of these bands (GREEN DAY / OFFSPRING) were undeniably punk rock and are certainly an indelible part of punk rock history. It must be so strange for a young punk to hear the UK SUBS's Alvin Gibbs saying that "you could literally be killed for being a punk rock" in the late '70's / early '80's when today it's hard to avoid all the punk music and imagery that shoved in your face on every radio station and in every shopping mall and this is why documentaries like this are so damn important. Young punks must not take this for granted, it's like all those all war vets who say we had to fight so you could have your freedom- well it's exactly the same with punk rock – the first wave took all the beatings and abuse so that kids today can have their mother's dye their hair green for them. And, don't get me wrong, that's a good thing but it shouldn't be taken for granted or hopped into as a fad. Punks should know their history and with movies like this they don't even have to do much research, so there's no excuse!!

'Punk's Not Dead' explains how the movement ripped apart everything that rock was built on, with the D.I.Y. ethic punk rock built it's own underground record industry right under the major labels' noses – never has the music industry had to work so hard to understand and take a piece of something which is why it took them the best part of three decades to cash in and Jello Biafra says he's surprised that it took them so long. Early D.I.Y. labels like Dischord and BYO are talked about with interviews with Ian Mackaye and Shawn Stern and there's a great part where Greg Ginn talks about how BLACK

FLAG were at the top of the hardcore movement but that still meant sleeping on people's floors.

The Warped is of course covered in the documentary and this tour has certainly been responsible for the commercialisation of punk rock, that tour is a huge business with some very high-level sponsors and there's clearly mixed feeling towards this on this documentary. Jennifer Finch of L7 says that due to things like the Warped Tour, real punk music hasn't been commercialised but the look has and I have to say that I totally agree with that – mall kids are way too lazy to look into and research things so they just have to have it thrown in their face at places like Hot Topic where it's all laid out for them – and Hot Topic is another subject touched on in this documentary and, again, a very valid one since they have played a major role in the commercialisation of punk rock and availability of the look. This is a truly comprehensive punk rock history featuring such a huge range of bands throughout punk's long career...BLACK FLAG, SOCIAL DISTORTION, STIFF LITTLE FINGERS, THE DAMNED, NOFX, THE SUBHUMANS, THE ADICTS, BAD RELIGION, MINOR THREAT, RANCID, PENNYWISE, UK SUBS, BUZZCOCKS, DEAD KENNEDYS, THE CASUALTIES, GBH, TSOL, CHANNEL 3, THE BUSINESS, SEX PISTOLS and tons more and the movie also touches on world-wide scenes in Lithuania, Serbia, Iceland, New Zealand, Belgium, Russia and Israel.

As if this weren't enough, there's so much extras on this DVD too (over 2 hours!!) that are as good as the main documentary itself! There's a segment on punk rock housing in Los Angeles in the 1970's with Geza X, Alice Bag, Shawn Stern and also in D.C. in the 1980's with Sab Grey and Wendel Blow from Iron Cross, a section about hair with Rob from Total Chaos, the annual Punk Rock bowling tournament in Las Vegas, a tour of Fat Mike's house, out-takes, more interviews and so much more.

As you can tell from this review, I hold punk rock very dear to me indeed and I'm certainly against things like the Warped Tour and Hot Topic and shit like that but I'm glad that they were talked about in this DVD and I also like the fact that opinions from both sides of the fence are expressed, this is certainly not a one-sided documentary and that's a good thing. This DVD's job is to chronicle the birth and rise of punk rock as it happened (and is happening) whether people like it or not, it's history and a very lush history it is and I have to say that all the stuff that fucks me off about punk rock, actually makes me love it even more...it was designed to fuck people off and it's great to see that it's still doing that 30 years on.

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