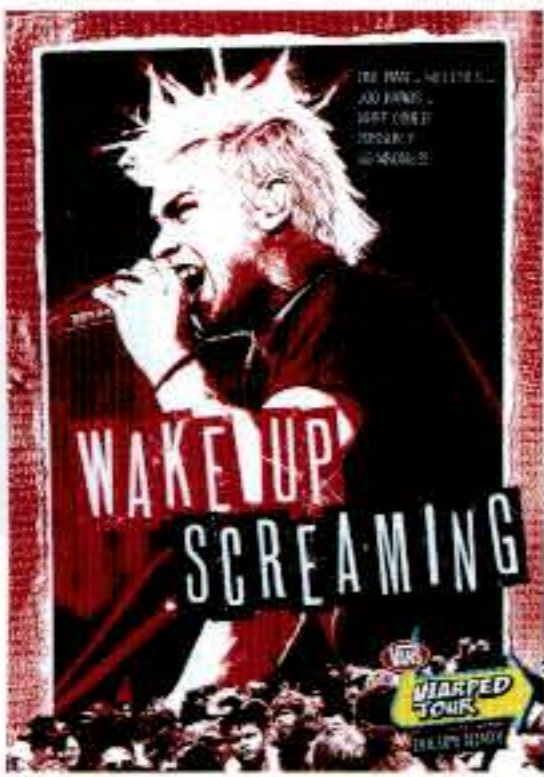


Vans Warped Tour Documentary *Wake Up Screaming* MVD VISUAL



www.mvdb2b.com

by Todd Sikorski

Not many people know it, but the Vans Warped tour has become one of the most successful touring music festivals around. Lollapalooza and Ozzfest have gotten all the press over the years, but neither has the longevity of the Warped tour (which has been around since 1994).

With this success, it is about time a good DVD came out about the Warped Tour. Unfortunately, the latest one marketed as such is *Wake Up Screaming*. The documentary is disappointing because it is more about the experiences of a PETA representative working on behalf of that organization

than it is about the musicians and concert itself.

Wake Up Screaming does feature interviews with band members and snippets of performances from the 2005 tour. Hawthorne Heights, Story of the Year and Bleed the Dream are a few of the bands seen throughout the documentary. However, everything music related takes a back seat to PETA's campaigning and agenda.

Interestingly enough, the DVD is most compelling when it touches on the representative's personal life. One of the most rock aspects of *Wake Up Screaming* is the toll

being on the road takes on one's marriage. The documentary's lead character and his wife do not have the happiest of endings during the period the disc covers.

Still, this is supposed to be a music DVD; on that end, it disappoints. It is kind of like the feeling you get when asking for the hippest pair of Vans sneakers for Christmas and instead getting an ugly pair of Birkenstock sandals.



Ween *Shinola, Volume One* CHOCODOG RECORDS



www.ween.com

by Todd Sikorski

Ween is one of those bands that is so desperately needed in rock today. The Pennsylvania duo of Dean and Gene Ween can write irreverent, quirky songs extremely well, but they also have the talent to record brilliant proper songs that jump across all genres of music. In other words, Ween is Tenacious D if Jack Black was more serious about expanding his band's sound and depth.

Many of Ween's charms can be heard on *Shinola*, a collection of mostly unreleased songs from the band's back catalog. While the liner notes do not say it, the

majority of the tracks here were written sometime between 1992 and 2003. A few of the cuts are among the best band has ever recorded.

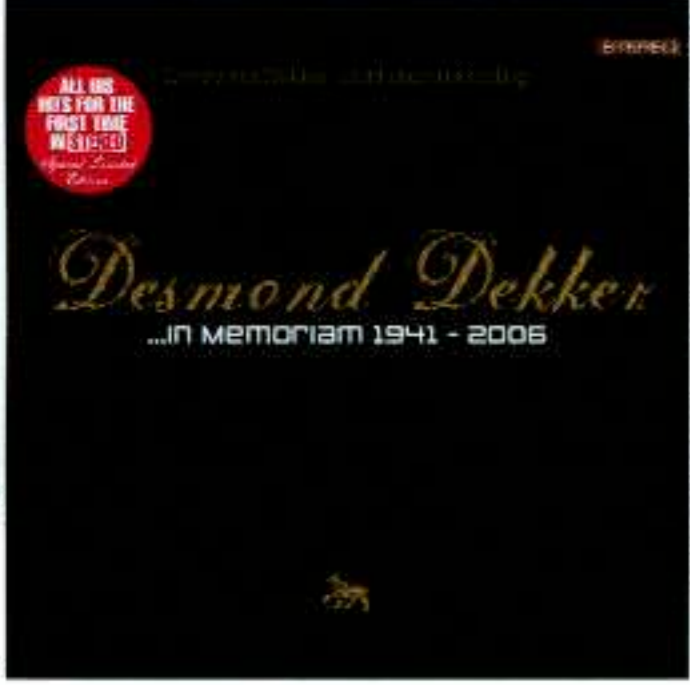
"Gabrielle" shines above all with its Thin Lizzy-like guitar influence and infectious chorus. "Monique the Freak" is another gem which channels Prince just as well, if not better, than Beck did on his underrated *Midnite Vultures* CD. The hypnotic, psychedelic "Did You See Me?" is also a must-listen because it showcases the band's long neglected musical talents.

Surprisingly, *Shinola* fails most on the quirkiest tracks. The opener, "Tastes Good On the Bun," is a silly throwaway and "Big Fat Fuck" is a noisy letdown that should have been left off this compilation.

Overall, *Shinola* is good enough to be an essential for all Ween fans. However, if one is new to the band, fewer disappointments can be found on previous praised releases such as *Chocolate and Cheese* and even the band's last few live CDs.



Desmond Dekker *In Memoriam: 1941-2006* SECRET



www.secretrecordslimited.com

by Eric Nagy

Desmond Dekker was Jamaica's music man before Bob Marley, and his hits including "Israelites" and "007 (Shanty Town)" brought the island nation's music to the continents before anyone else's. This collection is from his last recording session in 2004, not released until five months after his death in May 2006. He doubtless did not intend for the album to be titled *In Memoriam*, but with a track list that includes 20 of his most influential songs spanning four decades, it is a highly appropriate swan song.

Compared to the originals, the song versions on this album have a production clarity that only a London studio with 21st century technology could put out. This is both good and bad, in that it loses some of its original raw energy but does great justice to the rich vocal talent that Dekker still had in abundance even into his sixties. The recording quality also highlights the connection between Dekker's music and the pop/soul movement that was at work outside Jamaica at the same time; songs like "Nincompoop" and "Don't Blame Me" can claim the music of a ska pioneer and

the buttery melodies of a lovesick crooner.

As much as anything, Dekker's music is a reminder that life is good even when everything goes bad. "Jamaica Ska" is a kind of template for all ska music, singing the praises of a democratic dance that anyone can do; "Sing A Little Song" is like a more pleasurable ancestor of "Don't Worry Be Happy." Ultimately, Dekker's last recording has a certain wise contentment that lacks the weight of the originals but is still good for the soul.

