

Rockin' Metal gets two devil-horns up

Heavy metal has a lot in common with Jason, Freddy and Keith Richards: It cannot be killed. Grunge couldn't stop it. Teen-pop couldn't stop it. Rap couldn't stop it. At this point, we suspect nothing short of nuclear holocaust could stop it. (And of course, that would still leave Keef.)

Considering how invincible heavy metal is — and how long it's been around — there haven't been many great documentaries on the genre. And the few there are — *Heavy Metal Parking Lot* and *Decline of Western Civilization: The Metal Years* spring to mind — aren't exactly complimentary or insightful. So it's high time somebody looked at the world of heavy metal with some intelligence and enthusiasm.

That someone is Sam Dunn. A while back, the 30-year-old Victoria anthropologist and metalhead decided to merge his two passions. So, armed with a film crew and his undiminished enthusiasm for all things loud, fast and heavy, the long-haired Dunn travelled the globe and hung out with a host of hard rock heroes: Alice Cooper, Lemmy, Rob Zombie, Tony Iommi, Bruce Dickinson, Geddy Lee and plenty more. On the flip side of the coin, he talks to fans, supergroupie Pamela Des Barres, professors and scribes. He even does his fair share of headbanging at Germany's infamous Wacken festival.

But the result — the 96-minute documentary *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey* — is more than just some

aging fan-boy's rock road-trip. Along the way, Dunn (and co-writer/directors Scot McFayden and Jessica Joy Wise) do their best to get the real number of the beast. They probe the roots and origins of metal. They analyse the sound. They discuss issues like censorship and the PMRC, gender and sexuality, religion, death and violence.

A lot of it, to be sure, is already familiar turf. Yes, Black Sabbath were the first true metal band. Yes, it's a way for kids to simultaneously rebel and conform. Yes, Ronnie James

Dio is practically a dwarf. But Dunn does cover some ground that hasn't been trod to death. A segment on the Norwegian black metal scene — one of whose stars went on a church burning spree several years ago — is fascinatingly chilling. Dio's schoolboy rivalry with Gene Simmons over who invented the devil-horn hand sign is a hoot. And Dee Snider's take on the homoerotic nature of metal — in which young males idolize men who are either dolled up like women or dress in skin-tight leather — is hilarious, if only for all the homophobic sputtering it's going to spark from metalheads.

Put it all together — and toss in a second disc with extended bonus interviews, more footage on the Norwegian scene, a massive metal genealogy chart / family tree and more — and you've got one of the smartest and best-researched DVDs to focus on the devil's music. We give it two horns up.

★★★★1/2



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Cream

Disraeli Gears Eagle Rock | EMI

Perhaps you've seen the *Classic Albums* series on TV. Perhaps you've also seen the DVDs in stores. Perhaps you've wondered why you should shell out for something you could see for free. Episodes like the one on



Cream's *Disraeli Gears* are why. Not just because the 47-minute show — a track-by-track appraisal of the album — is a standout, with recollections and anecdotes from former

bandmates Eric Clapton, Ginger Baker and Jack Bruce. Not because you also get interviews from freaky lyricist Pete Brown and others. And not because it finally explains what *SWLABR* means. No, the real appeal of *Disraeli Gears* — as with all the *Classic Albums* DVDs — is the bonus footage. Here, that consists of half an hour of goodies like: Vintage live footage of *Tales of Brave Ulysses* and *We're Going Wrong*; a drum clinic from Bruce; solo acoustic performances of *Sunshine of Your Love* and *Outside Woman Blues* by Clapton; and more. Perhaps you want to check it out.

★★★★1/2

Nick Cave

Road to God Knows Where | Live at the Paradiso Mute | EMI

If some Nick Cave is good, more is better. And this twofer reissue may be best of all. It certainly delivers the best of both worlds from this bleak murder balladeer. Disc 1 has *The*



Road to God Knows Where, a 113-minute black-and-white tour doc that follows Cave and his Bad Seeds across North America in 1989, with all the petty bickering,

cheapskate promoters, drunken fans and grinding repetition you'd expect — but sadly, less live fare than you'd like. Good thing Disc 2 makes up for it with *Live at the Paradiso*, a 1992 set taped at the Amsterdam venue and featuring intense performances of *The Mercy Seat*, *Papa Won't Leave You*, *Henry*, *In the Ghetto* and 10 more. Plus there are a couple of short films as bonus footage. Who could ask for more?

★★★★



Captain Beefheart The Velvet Underground Under Review Sexy Intellectual | MVD

You'd be hard-pressed to find two more critically acclaimed American musical acts than The Velvet Underground and Captain Beefheart. And you'd be harder pressed to find much decent video of either. That is, until Beefheart and The Velvets became the latest subjects of the outstanding British music series *Under Review*. If you haven't seen one of the half-dozen *Review* episodes on Small Faces, Kate Bush, Syd Barrett or The Smiths, rest assured they're a fan's dream, with in-depth analysis, tons of relevant interviews — and best of all, acres of vintage performance footage. The Beefheart set offers nearly two hours on the fiercely original dada-blues poet, as told through the recollections of a dozen former Magic Band members and illustrated with stunning live clips and videos from his two-decade career.

Ditto the 85-minute Velvet Underground episode, which is anchored by lengthy new interviews with drummer Moe Tucker and late-period member Doug Yule, intercut with plenty of rare live film. Extras in both sets include leftover interview footage and interactive quizzes. Admittedly, it would be better if main men like Lou Reed and Beefheart were interviewed — and if the discs included uncut versions of all that old performance footage. But hey, beggars can't be choosers. And unless somebody else decides to put Beefheart and the Velvets in the video spotlight, these two are the benchmark.

Both: ★★★★★

