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"A sinister cabal of superior writers."

Music DVD Review: Pearl Jam: Under Review



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Author: Greg Barbrick — Published: Sep 19, 2010 at 9:19 pm

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Pearl Jam's place in the great Grunge Explosion of 1991 remains a subject of debate in some quarters. How they got together, previous bands, and the fact that the singer was from out of town were all considered major strikes against them. To a vociferous few they were seen as serious strikes that is. The rest of us were too busy enjoying the music. 20 years later PJ are still going strong, while nearly all the others from that memorable year have sadly come and gone.

The new DVD *Pearl Jam: Under Review* tells the group's story from the beginning right up to today. Like all of the DVDs in the *Under Review* series, it is an unauthorized documentary. That means there was no cooperation or involvement from anyone in the PJ camp. Instead, we get a collection of music critics talking about them, live footage from various sources, and some older interview segments.

While I understand the complaints about this format, particularly the inclusion of the critics, I found this 90 minute DVD to be very engaging. There are no enormous new revelations, or any groundbreaking new footage, but somehow the Pearl Jam story is presented in a consistently interesting and entertaining way regardless.

To the surprise of nearly everyone, Pearl Jam's debut *Ten* was a smash hit. It won rave reviews both from the public and the critics. They followed *Ten* up with *VS* a year later, which sold a staggering one million CDs the first week. A battle with Ticketmaster came next, which had the net effect of stopping PJ from touring the US for three solid years. *Vitalogy* became their third hit album in a row in 1994., And Pearl Jam served as Neil Young's back up band for his *Mirror Ball* album in 1995. Then they decided to scale it all back..

No Code was a record very few bands ever get to make. Pearl Jam's fourth album consciously avoided the big anthems and ballads they had become so famous for. Although they would never admit it to the record company, *No Code* was specifically designed to appeal to only the hardcore PJ audience. They basically set out to jettison the mainstream crowd that had been with them since *Ten*.

Continued on the next page

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Article Author: [Greg Barbrick](#)

Greg Barbrick is an old time "music biz" groupie/writer. He thinks that nothing good has been recorded since 1978.

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Pearl Jam - Under Review
 Release date: 2010-09-21
 Running time: 90 minutes
 Publisher: SEXY INTELLECTUAL



Pearl Jam - Touring Band 2000
 Release date: 2001-05-01
 Running time: 125 minutes
 Publisher: Sony



Imagine in Cornice - Live In Italy
 Release date: 2007-09-25
 Running time: 92 minutes
 Publisher: Rhino Records

Article comments

1 - Glen Boyd

Sep 19, 2010 at 9:25 pm

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I've always liked PJ and thought a lot of the flak they took from the Seattle scenesters back then was unwarranted.

Did Ten sound suspiciously like a Bad Company record? Sure it did...just as Soundgarden sounded like Sabbath and Zeppelin and Alice In Chains sounded like the Cult. So what?

Labels like "alternative" were always of a lot more use to the trendy music snobs than to those of us who just like a good rock and roll band anyway -- however you want to label it. Good review, dude.

-Glen

2 - Greg Barbrick

Sep 19, 2010 at 9:33 pm

Thanks Glen - it really is hard to fathom that it has been 20 years now since our fair city was going to save rock n roll huh?

3 - Glen Boyd

Sep 19, 2010 at 9:40 pm

Like Kurt Cobain was ever gonna' save anything...hell, he couldn't even save himself.

-Glen

4 - El Bicho

Sep 19, 2010 at 9:48 pm

I loved No Code. A lot of the songs hit home at the time it came out.

So do you not think the Soundgarden reunion will last?

5 - Greg Barbrick

Sep 19, 2010 at 9:48 pm

It was a fun time there for a minute though.

6 - Greg Barbrick

Sep 19, 2010 at 9:49 pm

I don't think it will last, those guys fight way too much, and now they're what 15 years older than before. No

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7 - zingzing

Sep 19, 2010 at 9:54 pm

and cornell has become the absolute antithesis of his former self.

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8 - Glen Boyd

Sep 19, 2010 at 10:05 pm

Thayil always hated touring, and I think Chris Cornell secretly wants to be Justin Timberlake. I don't see a long future there.

-Glen

9 - Greg Barbrick

Sep 19, 2010 at 10:08 pm

Cornell wants to be Timberlake, thats pretty good Glen.

10 - Glen Boyd

Sep 19, 2010 at 10:11 pm

Spoken for truth.

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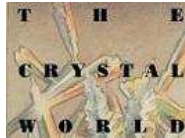
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by Glen Boyd on September 22, 2010



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