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MALEVOLENT CREATION

Death from Down Under (Arctic)



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It took them 20 years to do it, but **MALEVOLENT CREATION** finally gave the Australian fans what they so desperately desired: a homicidal performance of U.S. death metal classics. The lineup of guitarists **Phil Fasciana** and **Marco Martell**, drummer **Gus Rios**, bassist **Jason Blachowicz**, and vocalist **Brett Hoffman** is tight as hell and downright rabid during the 70-minute set at Sydney's Gaelic Theater. Filmed on the March 27, 2009 stop of the group's "Doomsday X" world tour, the performance is the centerpiece of "Death from Down Under".

The tension built to dangerous levels, the sounds of Buffalo's finest export breaking into the mood-setting "Memorial Arrangements" had the crowd feverishly cheering the end of a decades-long wait. Leaning most heavily on the material from 1991 debut "The Ten Commandments" (four cuts), including the real show-launch in "Premature Burial", followed by 1992's "Retribution" and 1995's "Eternal" (three tracks from each), the performance is damn near perfect. Locked in tight and unleashing wave upon wave of sonic violence,



it was the guitars of **Hoffman** and **Martell** that contributed the most to the sea of melted faces. **Blachowicz's** facial expressions alone spoke volumes about his rightful place on stage playing with his blood brothers. It is **Hoffman**, however, who is deserving of highest praise. His new lease on life in rejoining the band for "**Doomsday X**" was not taken for granted and he turns in a vocal performance that is pretty well flawless. He's never sounded this firmly in command of the patterns, nor his delivery this powerful, right down to the spot-on inflectional shifts.

Though the intensity never wanes, the show's most intense moments include the spine-tingling intro and monster crush of "**Coronation of Our Domain**", which bleeds right on in to "Monster". On that same level is the trio of "**Blood Brothers**", "**Infernal Desire**", and "Living in Fear" played in the same sequence as they appear on "**Eternal**". Arguably one of the best songs **MALEVOLENT CREATION** has ever written, "**The Will to Kill**" was a roof-raiser and **Hoffman's** vocal interpretation of it will almost make you forget that **Kyle Symons** sang it on the studio version. "**Multiple Stab Wounds**" is, of course, a highlight for the crowd and "**Malevolent Creation**" never fails to be an explosive show-closer.

As for the production qualities, the sound is clear, white hot and defined by the type of guitar crunch you'd expect from a **MALEVOLENT CREATION** performance. It is the picture quality with which some may find fault. Though professionally filmed with four cameras by **Hardline Media**, the visual presentation is too dark, regardless of intent. That said, it looks and feels like a great death metal show. Any video production issues are just not that big of a deal and will do nothing to detract from your enjoyment of the performance.

"**Death from Down Under**" is an easy purchase recommendation to make for any **MALEVOLENT CREATION** fan. It rips from start to finish and you'll sit in awe at the violence delivered for the duration. There isn't much in the way of special features. A short segment of random filming called "**On the Road**" is forgettable, but the 10-minute interview with the band is worth seeing and ends up informative, even for such a short running time. "**Bootlegged in Melbourne**" is exactly what the title would indicate; nothing special, but not wasted space either. It is the Sydney performance that is the reason you'll want this one and anything extra is just gravy. Recommended.

- **Scott Alisoglu**

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This is definately an 'infernal desire' of mine! Glad I didn't get the Australian Onslaught CD as assume this is the same performance. Though funny they're still grouping the same songs together (Coronation... & Monster, Infernal Desire & Living in Fear) as 10 years ago (Live at the Whiskey A Go-Go) but guess if it ain't broke... well, y'know...

BTW, why no Invidious Dominion review on here?!

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