

is the perfect place to start. The *Essential Judas Priest* (Sony) is a two-disc collection of Priest standards that pretty well covers the band's most-popular period. All the hits and crowd-pleasers are here—"Breaking The Law," "Hot Rockin'," and "Freewheel Burning"—and there are even a few newer numbers like "Judas Rising" and "Revolution" of the last studio album. But like any comp, there are also a few duds like the horrific "Turbo Lover."

The *Live Vengeance* DVD is treat for both diehards and new fans, featuring a show from the band's *Screaming For Vengeance* tour. It was 1982, the height of the band's popularity, when they still had a couple decent albums in them. Sure, Rob Halford straddling a Harley Davidson covered in leather and studs may seem a bit showy today, but this was the time when metal was all about excess, and made no bones about flaunting it. The show includes most of the aforementioned hits, cranked up to 11, with all the pomp and bombast that an '80s metal show should have.

Sanctuary Records has just reissued another round of classic Motörhead albums recently—and that's a very good thing. Most of these have been reissued a few times already, but not like this new batch. Each comes with a second disc of bonuses, a comprehensive booklet chock full of photos, and a full-color slipcase. This reissue installment includes *Another Perfect Day*, *Rock 'n' Roll* and *Orgasmatron*. I was especially pleased to see the new pressing of *Another Perfect Day*, as it's always been one of my faves. Contrary to what many fans and critics thought of it upon its initial release in 1983, I've always thought it to be a damn good record. The reason for all the controversy? Well, Motörhead had just come off a successful run with its formative lineup of Lemmy on the bass and vocals, Phil "Philthy Animal" Taylor on drums and "Fast Eddie" Clarke on guitar. Clarke had just exited the band and was replaced by former Thin Lizzy axe-master Brian "Robbo" Robertson. The problem was that Robbo didn't fit in, especially where the image was concerned. Adorned in bright striped shirts, headband, legwarmers(!), and short, curly red hair, his appearance had more in common with Loverboy than his denim-and-leather-clad

band mates—and he didn't much endear himself to Motörhead's freaky, biker audience either. But, Robbo was a badass on the axe, and brought a whole new level of musicality to the band's sound. Both the production and songs on *Another Perfect Day* are stellar—just check out the searing opener "Back At The Funny Farm" for proof. Then there's the dark boogie of "Shine," the driving energy of "Rock It" and the slow, melodic grind of the single "One Track Mind." The band was also lambasted and accused of selling out for the more commercial "Dancing On Your Grave," but in reality, it's just a straight-up rock 'n' roll jam with a hook, and is still 100% 'Head, so I'm not sure what all the fuss was about. Besides, Lemmy would later dabble more in this kind of no-nonsense rock on many future releases.

Overall, *Another Perfect Day* isn't completely

perfect—there are a few too many solos on it for my tastes—but it remains Motörhead's most underrated album to this day. The second disc contains an entire live set recorded at the Manchester Apollo in 1983. Featuring many of the album's choicest cuts, this rare set has Robbo also running through older numbers with ease, injecting subtle sophistication to the war-torn classics with his deft touch.

The bonus disc is worth the price alone, but it's still the same price you'd pay for a single CD.

Iron Maiden has recently released its *Death On The Road* DVD set (Sony/Sanctuary). Upon first hearing of its release, I questioned whether or not the world needed yet another Maiden live document. My conclusion was 'Hell yeah.' Like Judas Priest, Maiden has been back in the public eye as of late, and is as relevant as ever. The concert portion of this set was filmed in 2003 on the band's *Dance Of Death* tour. I've been a longtime fan of the first four Maiden

albums, but began to lose interest once the band got all medieval on our asses, eschewing its more primal metal bits in favor of overly ambitious, new-age shit. But this concert features plenty of good stuff, including the excellent early nuggets "Wrathchild" and "Iron Maiden" mixed with some mid-career stuff ("Lord of the Flies") and some later songs ("Rainmaker"), so there's just enough balance that the band is not purely resting on the laurels of its early gems, nor boring us with too much later material. The only downsides are the spotty vocals in areas, but the performances are solid, and the band more than pulls it off against its impressive, gothic stage sets. This DVD set includes a bonus disc of documentaries, galleries, interviews and promo videos from the *Dance Of Death* album, and comes smartly packaged in a fold-out digipack with a color booklet. For fans new and old, this is an entertaining little set.

German power-metallers Accept have been commemorated in the *Metal Blast From The Past* DVD (MVD). As a young kid, the band's groundbreaking *Restless And Wild* album made a major impression on me. The razor-sharp riffs, double-bass kick and earsplitting vocals of mini-me front man Udo Dirkschneider were a potent combination. These Teutonic warriors co-opted Judas Priests' dual-guitar, leather-and-studs shtick and eventually made it their own. But, in looking at them some 20 years later, they haven't aged nearly as well as some of their contemporaries. This DVD features a concert from 1985, with some of the band's best stuff—the riveting double-bass juggernaut "Fast As A Shark," the quintessential power-metal anthem "Restless And Wild" and the epic "Princess Of The Dawn." There's also plenty of campy guitar-wielding choreography, Udo's pipsqueak antics, and enthusiastic fist pumping from the audience. One thing about Accept that I always found a wee bit odd was all the gay innuendo the band employed, especially as a heavy metal band in the über-homophobic



1980s. Just look at some of the song titles for flamingly obvious examples: “London Leather Boys,” “Screaming For A Love Bite,” “Midnight Mover,” and “Balls To The Wall.” Maybe it’s a German thing, or perhaps the band just followed Priest’s lead too closely by emulating its gay front man... who knows? Either way, it makes no difference, and there still are a few enjoyable numbers here, and some great guitar bits. The DVD also includes video clips, a behind-the-scenes featurette and some previously unreleased audio tracks. Check out [www.musicvideodistributors.com](http://www.musicvideodistributors.com) for more info.

On the poppier side, there’s Poison’s *Seven Days Live* DVD (MVD/Cherry Red). While they weren’t the greatest players, and they made hair metal a universal target of derision and dismissal, there’s no denying the party-rock perfection of the band’s first album *Look What The Cat Dragged In*. In true-DIY fashion, this band of Sunset Strip stalwarts played up their animated personalities, built a huge following from scratch, and were relentless in their pursuit of a record deal, in spite of all the flack they took for being a campy, party-rock band with makeup. Unfortunately, this DVD concert is worlds away from that period. Filmed in 1993 when grunge was also in full swing, the unrefined lunacy that was the band’s strong point early on is all but stripped away in favor of a more standard-and-fluffy hard-rock approach. Part of this is due to the absence of loudmouthed guitarist C.C. DeVille (who was ousted due to his escalating drug problems). His replacement Richie Kotzen—a far superior player—does a valiant job. The DVD quality is excellent, in spite of the rather lackluster performances, and features a few glam-pop nuggets like “Talk Dirty To Me” and “Look What The Cat Dragged In.” As hard as they try to fit in with the new grunge scene (heavier material, stripped-down image), Poison will still always be remembered best for their unapologetic, hairspray-coated early days, where they—somewhat naively—conquered the world for a short time. Go to [www.musicvideodistributors.com](http://www.musicvideodistributors.com) or [www.cherryred.co.uk](http://www.cherryred.co.uk) for the skinny on this one.

For the thrasher set, here’s a pair of brand-new, old-school DVDs that should do the trick. First: Megadeth. You gotta feel a little sorry for ol’ Dave

Mustaine. No matter how hard he’s tried, the guy just can’t seem to get a break. First he’s ousted from Metallica just on the cusp of superstardom, then, he’s trapped in their shadow eternally, even throughout his own impressive achievements in Megadeth.

*Arsenal Of Megadeth* (Capitol/EMI) is a two-DVD set that has



everything including the kitchen sink. All the best vids are here (“Peace Sells,” “Wake Up Dead”) plus interviews, TV appearances, tour footage, cover songs (“Anarchy In The U.K.” and “No More Mr. Nice Guy”) and live clips of Mustaine doing what he does best: being pissed off—and you get three hours worth of that. Megadeth were never as clever as Metallica, as exciting as Priest, nor as unpretentious as Motörhead to be taken as seriously, but they still have lots of fans, and for them, this set is a good deal.

Pantera were a true anomaly. They were never in vogue, yet always fashionable in that it was always considered “cool,” to like them, even when metal’s popularity was at an all-time low. And, they were not your atypical thrash band either, choosing to rely more on the power of the groove as opposed to sheer speed and chunk. Then there was Dimebag Darrell, a guitar hero’s hero. This guy had taste and chops, and was shredding long after it was passé to do so, even during the height of grunge, where many guitar players could barely bang out riffs, let

alone play a solo. And for that matter, some of Dime’s best riffs had more in common with the likes of old Van Halen than what you’d typically find in thrash. In a nutshell, Pantera is one the most universally respected bands in metal, because of their unflinching dedication to their craft. *3 Vulgar Videos From Hell* DVD (Rhino Records) compiles three previously released home videos *Cowboys From Hell The Videos*, *Vulgar Video* and *Watch It Go*. There’s also bonus footage from

the band’s appearance at the Monsters Of Rock festival in Moscow. It’s refreshing seeing the band in happier times, hanging out between the videos before the politics and infighting that splintered them apart. And of course, it’s great to see Dimebag doing his six-string bits—his gifts live on in this release

These releases are just a sampling of the great old-school stuff that’s resurfacing now. Stay tuned for more of the best from the past, and if you have any questions, comments or suggestions, drop me a line at

[retrohead77@yahoo.com](mailto:retrohead77@yahoo.com). See ya next issue.

Cheers! 

