

The Meanies



by the labels as simply as an easy way to port a quick buck out of a band's dedicated fans. It features a variety of live material from as recent as 2005 and as far back as 2001. The undoubted highlight is the complete set filmed at the Annandale, Sydney on their 2003 in Australian tour. I say that not out of some nostalgic notion because I was there, but because it's the most intimate and visually stimulating of all the different performances featured here. In fact, it's even more awesome than I remember it. If you ever so much as had a mother's cousin who once heard from a neighbour's best friend that Isis were a great band, check out this DVD now. Who cares if people think you're weird?

THE MEANIES

The Meanies (Madman/AV Channel)



It was hard to avoid seeing The Meanies back in their early to mid-nineties heyday, when they'd frequently make the trek up to Sydney from Melbourne. At first me and my mates would go see them at the Lansdowne or Annandale or wherever, but few years later they had built up such a following they could sell out the bloody huge Phoenician Club (R.I.P) on their own. Along with Tumbleweed, they ruled the national All Ages punk scene at that time, and (following on from the pioneering work of the Hard-Ons and Massapeal) were one of the first local punk bands to twig to the massive potential of merchandise. Musically they weren't doing a hell of a lot that you look back now and think, "Wow, revolutionary!" But leader Linkie Meanie (vocals/guitar) could still write the fuck out of a pop punk song, and if it wasn't for them Frenzal Rhomb would probably have never heard of The Ramones. This DVD contains a doco on the band, exploring their origins, existence, demise and resurrection. It features interviews with the members as well as a variety of their fans and peers including Kram (Spiderbait), Bill Walsh (ex-Cosmic Psychos) and Jay Whalley and Lindsay McDougall (Frenzal Rhomb). Also included on the disc is a passable live set from '94 as well as all the Meanies clips dating right back to the all-time classic, "Gangrenous".

THE MC5

Kick Out The Jams (MVD/MRA)



There is an inspirational documentary out there somewhere called *The MC5: A True Testimonial* which has been kept in limbo since its 2004 theatrical release due to the fact that MC5 guitarist Wayne Kramer refuses to clear the rights to some of the songs. Until those legalities are cleared up, the definitive documentary of The MC5 will sit on the shelf gathering dust while other, inferior (but nonetheless fully authorized) DVDs try to milk a few bucks out of the Detroit proto-punk band's legacy. This one was compiled from archival footage shot by noted MC5 documentarian (and manager John Sinclair's wife) Leri Sinclair, and edited by Destroy All Monsters guitarist/vocalist Carey Loran. Basically it's a psychedelic mash of images of the MC5 from the late sixties cut to an assortment of live and studio recordings. Nostalgia buffs and real died-in-the-wool '5 fans will enjoy this kaleidoscopic barrage, but even with a measly thirty five-minute running time, I still found it easy to get distracted by other things (and I'm the kinda pathetic geek who has all three albums on vinyl and CD plus a whole bunch of bootlegs).

R.I.P REST IN PIECES

The Art Of Joe Coleman (Disinformation/Stamp)



Rest In Pieces is a documentary made ten years ago about one very intense dude, American painter and performance artist Joe Coleman, whose idiosyncratic artworks feature complex imagery and wording. Often his paintings contain a variety of portioned-off "sub-scenarios" relating to the main subject, kinda like paintings within paintings - gigantic, comic-like jigsaw puzzles. While Coleman's art is alive with colour, his inspiration comes from the ultra dark side of human existence - serial killers being a particularly attractive muse. He claims all of his art is about catharsis. And maybe that's the reason there's a scene of him scalping and hacking up a dead body in the morgue with a saw? For me though, that, and biting the heads off mice in his performance

art pieces can all seem a bit contrived - like shock for the sake of shock. Subtlety is a big part of why his paintings have more power than his performances. The finite detail of his brushwork is shown up wonderfully in the "Opera" section of the special features menu of this DVD, a rare close-camera investigation of the surfaces of his canvases. You'll be riding the pause button all the way.

THE STOOGES

Live At The Lakerse Festival (MRA)



Having already released one fairly average DVD since their reformation, The Stooges give it a second crack and manage to outstrip the previously released *Live In Detroit* (2003) in every way. But that's not to say *Live At Lakerse* doesn't have its sore points. While *Live In Detroit* was a fairly quaint, almost dated production, this is extremely well put together, with a host of strange visual effects and fast editing techniques. The sound quality is very good, bringing out every nuance of the magic the reformed Stooges are capable of conjuring. The main problem is the over abundance of arty-farty filters and the ceaseless editing flourishes. The filmmakers were obviously a couple of French trippers with a firm grip on how to create amazing visuals but no sense of when to stop. By the time Iggy and the lads are grinding out "Dirt" in the back half of the set, the special effects become so much you have to look away for fear of an epileptic seizure.

TEASERAMA

(Umbrella)



I was a bit fucked off that whoever packaged this DVD version of *Teaserama* emblazoned the cover with the line, "The Notorious Bettie Page stars in..." Couldn't they have said the Voluptuous Bettie Page,

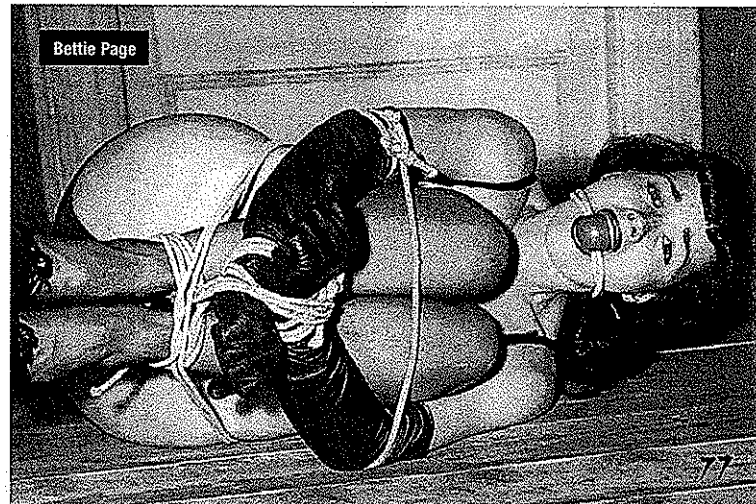
the Gorgeous Bettie Page, the Iconic Bettie Page...? If you're gonna start calling Bettie Page "notorious" what adjectives will be left to describe Chopper Read? Bettie was the girl next door in a bondage outfit who became an eternal "it" girl decades after she really was "it". These days you get young sluts outta primary school girls blowing goats on the internet; but Bettie and the other lasses in *Teaserama* don't even take off their granny undies. You'd have to be really hard up or just plain perverted to even crack a fat over these marching girls gone wild. Porno fans will spare a thought for their poor old grandfather when they realise this was the standard of wank fodder he had. Notoriously tame!

THE WORLD'S GREATEST WRESTLING MANAGERS

(WWE/Shock)



WWE Home Video is pumping out titles like the diarrhea out of Alan Jones' mouth, but rarely do they hit upon an idea as awesome as this. *World's Greatest Wrestling Managers* honours those fast-talking, crowd-baiting heroes of the sport; the guys you just love to hate. From the early pioneers of management like former hard man "Classy" Freddie Blassie (R.I.P) through the all-time greats like "Mouth Of The South" Jimmy Hart, The Grand Wizard (R.I.P) and Capt. Lou Albano, this delivers some choice vintage footage from the golden age of the turnbuckle. One of the big things the WWE lacks these days (besides dignity) is the fantastic interviews that were conducted out back by Mean Gene Okerlund and Gorilla Monsoon (R.I.P). That stuff was more entertaining than some of the match-ups. And nobody ruled that domain like the Bobby "The Brain" Heenan (born Raymond Louis Heenan, aka The Weasel). With a sharp intellect, an absurdist sense of humour and a natural flair for making an audience want to beat seven shades of shit out of him, "The Brain" was a god among managers. He deserves his own DVD.



Bettie Page