



Andrew W.K.: Who Knows?

[MVD]

Subtlety. Metaphor. Irony. Double-entendre. Sarcasm. Nuance.

These things do not exist in Andrew W.K.'s universe. He is rock'n'roll's reigning essentialist, stripping pop down to its basest instincts and flexing its primal urges. "Make Sex" is every love song ever. "Party Hard" is every party song ever. This is music with all the bullshit filtered out.

So why is Andrew W.K.'s DVD so full of bullshit? Subtitled *Live in Concert: 2000-2004*, it's a non-stop collage of footage shot everywhere from arenas in Asia to basements in Bumblefuck. But instead of being a straight-up concert movie, reveling in the adrenaline rush that is an Andrew W.K. performance, it's decided that it wants to be an art film. Scenes of Andrew and his burly backing band headbanging in perfect synchronicity or being mobbed on stage by ecstatic fans are distorted by primitive special effects (slo-mo, wacky colors, flashing lights, etc.). Full-throttle performances of anthems like "We Want Fun" and "Tear It Up" cut to close-ups of a young-looking Andrew, sitting in an empty apartment and silently staring at the camera for minutes at a time.

The thrilling stage show speaks for itself; why fuck it up with Paperrad trappings and shitty home movies? Why have Andrew narrate the thing with pearls of wisdom like, "It is my absolute honor and privilege, responsibility, and my job to make as many people feel as good as possible," and "We don't have fans, we have friends"? Why include, as part of the skimpy bonus features, a scene of one of Andrew's bandmates snorting parmesan cheese and declaring, "I'm not gonna get high, I'm gonna get fat"?

Who knows? -- Amy Phillips

<http://www.pitchforkmedia.com/features/weekly/06-06-05-dvd-summer06.shtml>