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Poison

Reviews

Seven Days Live (Cherry Red Records/ Music Video Distributors)

I'll be the first to admit that when '80's Glam Metal icons Poison announced the addition of renowned "underground" shredder Richie Kotzen as a replacement for recently departed original axeman CC Deville (who had left the group under less than ideal circumstances), I was initially more than a little optimistic. Although a mere twenty years old at the time, Kotzen already had three universally acclaimed solo releases to his credit (1989's *Richie Kotzen*, 1990's *Fever Dream* and 1991's *Electric Joy*) and appeared to be more than capable of replicating Deville's occasionally sloppy, ham-fisted style. However, following the much-hyped release of the *Native Tongue* in 1993--and the less than spectacularly attended world tour that followed--I found myself less than thrilled with group's supposedly '...new and improved...' look and feel.

Not surprisingly, the union failed to last as the mercurial guitarist was summarily jettisoned from the group amid a flurry of embarrassing infidelity-related accusations (you all know the story). Now, thirteen freakishly long years later, a testament of the line-up's ability--as if there had been an enormous demand for such a document--has appeared in the form of an apparently hastily produced DVD.

On the disappointingly lackluster *Seven Days Live* (2006), an expertly captured fourteen track collection of sweat-soaked concert footage (taken from the group's April 23, 1993 performance at London's historic Hammersmith Apollo), each track, beginning with the promisingly optimistic "Strike Up The Band", the maddeningly infectious "Ride The Wind", and the overwrought quasi power ballad "Something To Believe In", immediately engulfs the listener with a virtual tidal wave of gritty yet passionate vocals, searing fretwork and redundantly bombastic arrangements that are--despite being almost entirely entrenched amid the fist-pumping, lighter-waving insanity that pushed the once prominent genre to the very brink of extinction--without a doubt, quite easily worthy of the highest of critical and commercial accolades.

Continuing with the acoustic-tinged "Stand", the emotion-laden "Fallen Angel", and the awkwardly-titled (albeit still somewhat effective) "Until You Suffer Some (Fire And Ice)", the group, now effectively stripped of the hedonistic, tongue-in-cheek charm that initially helped to propel the group to the dizzying heights of international stardom, gamely attempts to capture the rapt and undivided attention of all parties involved with a technically precise yet surprisingly uninspired performance that, for lack of a more eloquent description, finds the once pioneering act simply going through the motions, an inescapably painful characteristic that fails to re-solidify the still ferocious foursome's once justifiably

well-deserved reputation as one of the premier live acts amid the increasingly stagnant--and undeniably inbred--Hair Metal sub-genre.

Although Kotzen's undeniable wealth of talent is, without a doubt, perfectly suited for the sometimes thought-provoking Native Tongue era compositions that were written and composed with his technically proficient, fundamentally sound style in mind (most notably on the previously mentioned standouts "The Scream" and "Body Talk"), the axeman ultimately takes far too many liberties with Deville's original '...let the good times roll...' solos on the group's early Pop Metal classics--i.e. "Talk Dirty To Me", and "Nothin' But A Good Time"--often altering them via improvisation to the point of ridiculousness or parody. Unfortunately for Kotzen, it is this very factor that will almost assuredly guarantee that his relatively short-lived stint with the group will remain as little more than a colorful footnote amid their long and storied history.

An absolute must-have only for die-hard completeists who insist on owning the group's entire Aqua Net and mascara-encrusted catalog, good, bad or otherwise, the majority--if not all--of the decidedly tuneful wares contained herein serve as little more than a much-welcomed reminder of how undeniably great the original Michaels, Deville, Dall and Rockett line-up truly was (and how incredibly lucky we all are that they were finally able to bury the hatchet and reunite). Thus, if you have once again found yourself in search of an ear-pleasing, user-friendly '80's Rock "throwback" that won't leave you feeling less than satisfied--or guilty for enjoying it)--do yourself and those in your immediate vicinity an incredibly enormous favor and avoid this pointless, cash-grab like the freakin' plague. Trust me, my friends, you'll be disappointed if you don't.

Select Discography

The Best Of Poison: 20 Years Of Rock (2006) *
Seven Days Live (DVD) (2006) *
The Best Of Blues & Ballads (2003) *
Hollyweird (2002) *
Crack A Smile...And More! (2000) ***
Power To The People (2000) *
Greatest Hits 1986-1996 (1996) *
Native Tongue (1993) **
Swallow This Live (1991) *
Flesh And Blood (1990) *
Open Up And Say...Ahh! (1988) *
Look What The Cat Dragged In (1986) *

* features guitarist CC Deville

** features guitarist Richie Kotzen

*** features guitarist Blues Saraceno

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