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VARIOUS ARTISTS

Metalmania 2005 (MVD/Metal Mind)

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In yet another example of Europe's festival organizing acumen, Poland's annual **Metalmania** festival continues to attract quality acts from a range of genres to the always-rabid Polish audience. The festival's main stage highlights have once again been captured on DVD, this time the 2005 extravaganza. The 205-minute two-disc set includes a professionally shot and mixed DVD containing 27 songs performed by 11 main stage bands, short (yet informative) interviews with each of the main stage and side stage bands, and a smattering of information (in text format) on each band and the event itself. The 52-minute bonus audio disc contains studio selections from 12 Polish bands playing an array of styles, some good and some not so good, but all worthy of at least checking out.

The DVD is an enjoyable experience on several levels. The sequencing of the performances and the variety of bands represented provides the viewer with a nice cross-section of metal, which most certainly includes a handful of acts which many folks have not been exposed. Whereas a full, often extended, set from a single band can at times drag, "**Metalmania**"

offers relatively easy viewing in one sitting, thanks to the quality of the performances and variety of styles. Some of the highlights include a ferocious four-song sequence from Sweden's black metal masters **DARK FUNERAL**, an insanely energetic three-song set from **THE HAUNTED** (led by Mr. Intensity, otherwise known as vocalist **Peter Dolving**), and **ARCTURUS'** intriguingly tripped out two-song segment.

Poland's **TURBO** performed a 25th anniversary show at the festival, three cuts of which were captured on the DVD. Sung in Polish and obviously NWOBHM-inspired, I was impressed by the energy of the band's front man, strong songwriting, and fiery guitar work. The crowd was thoroughly enthralled, often singing every word in unison.

The **NAPALM DEATH** and **PAIN** (featuring **Peter** from **HYPOCRISY**) segments are noteworthy as well. There is not much to say about England's finest grinders that hasn't been said before. The band is nearly untouchable in the live arena and the crowd ate it up. Having spent little time with **PAIN's** material, I found it interesting to see **Peter** performing in a totally different light (i.e., the band's gothic-tinged and decidedly more melodic style).

The DVD wraps up with an awe-inspiring three-song set from Finland's metal-disguised-as-classical-music act **APOCALYPTICA**. In addition to the group's climactic rendition of **METALLICA's "Seek and Destroy"**, which had the crowd gladly providing the vocals, a song called **"Betrayal"** was unequivocally heavy in a way that only **APOCALYPTICA** can be.

"Metalmania 2005" is a finely crafted DVD that is all meat and no gristle. It is one that will satisfy viewers who seek blazing live performances, as well as a sampling of metal's many sub-genres.

- Scott Alisoglu

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