

Various Artists - Metalmania 2005 · Metal Mind/MVD

This series of videos documenting Poland's legendary Metalmania festival is hard to beat. As always, the band lineup isn't entirely optimal as far as I'm concerned, but anything with live DIES IRAE, AMON AMARTH, DARK FUNERAL and NAPALM DEATH (holy fuck is their sound *massive* here) is kind of a mandatory purchase. DARZAMAT starts things off with just a single song, which isn't bad at all, and left me wondering why we don't get to see more. The answer might very well be that the DVD is over three hours in duration, so there just wasn't room. Maybe *Metalmania 2006* will be *two* DVDs plus a CD. I've grown so used to the stunning video (16x9, anamorphic) and audio (5.1 Dolby Digital Surround) that I almost forgot to mention them, which would be wrong. Metal Mind is truly the mark of quality for Metal concert videos. The other bands here ranged from the terrible like PAIN (just lame), A.N.J. (a *very* poor performance that I'm surprised was included), and ARCTURUS (musically good at times, but what is the deal with the singer's AIDS-inducingly gay antics and vocals?), to the passable such as THE HAUNTED (who were at least energetic, and have a good live *sound* if nothing else) and the Polish Power Metal legends TURBO (nothing bad to say about them other than that I can't understand the lyrics and the singer is very occasionally kind of too "Hard Rock" for me), to the weird, although sort of cool, acoustic set of APOCALYPTICA, which concludes with a totally insane cover of METALLICA's "Seek and Destroy," which was either the coolest or stupidest thing I've ever heard -I'm not sure which. Sadly missing from the video is anything from CRADLE OF FILTH and KATATONIA, both of which were also on the main stage. That's beyond disappointing, but I think that it's safe to assume that those bands' record labels simply wouldn't allow them to be on this disc, so I don't blame Metal Mind. I would love to see that footage, though...

Of course, the DVD has the typical bonus features (band info, photo slideshow, show history, etc...). And I haven't even mentioned the CD yet! The Second Stage bands are represented in audio only, which is a shame, but at least we get to hear one track each from: THUNDERBOLT, HERMH, HEDFIRST, HELL-BORN, QUO VADIS, PYORRHOEA, SUPREME LORD, MESS AGE, ABUSED MAJESTY, NAUMACHIA, DEAD BY DAWN, and VALINOR.

This set does its job: it makes me want to go to Poland and see the next Metalmania in person. - 9 - <Ray>

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