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Strange Monster

Various Artists

Wake Up Screaming: A Vans Warped Tour Documentary [DVD]

(MVD Visual)

US release date: 10 October 2006

by Jason MacNeil

Email Print Write to the editor

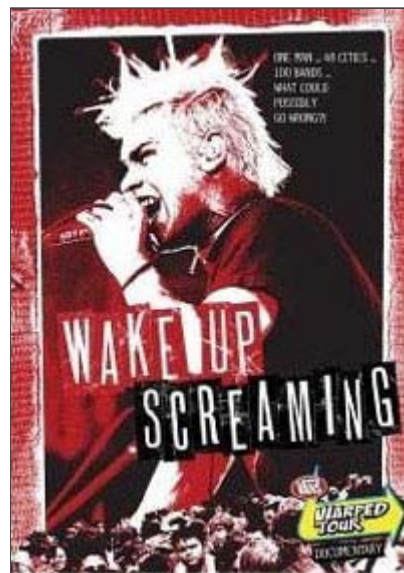
Every summer, with the exception of this past year, it was roughly an 18-hour day. Between catching buses and getting transportation back and forth from Barrie's Park Place (formerly Molson Park) to reviewing the day-long show, it was enjoyable, exhaustive and yet still worth the trek with a predominantly teen angst-riddled busload around me. The Vans Warped Tour looks easy on paper, but put in a similar 18-hour day building up and tearing down stages, ramps and booths for approximately 50 gigs in 60 days and it would be a strain on anyone.

So a documentary on the Vans Warped Tour, on first impression, would seem like a very interesting topic to delve into. However, this DVD isn't entirely what it may seem. The documentary revolves primarily around PETA2 (PETA's youth division) member and activist Jason Bayless. Bayless, like most of the bands on the tour, travels from show to show promoting the ethical treatment of animals, when not staging blindsiding antics like entering KFC with video of chickens being slaughtered. On other occasions he, along with a Goldfinger singer, set up shop in front of a Wet Seal location, condemning the chain for using fur in their products.

Bayless is an interesting figure as he discusses his altruistic belief in what he is doing. But more often than not, this is not about the Warped Tour per se as much as it is one person's perspective on it. Interviews with bands such as Emery and Strike Anywhere are interesting, but rarely touch on the tour itself. Instead, Bayless shows some band members why they should become vegan or vegetarian based on pamphlets, statistics, reports and videos. With roughly 100 bands taking part in the proceedings and a crew needed of approximately 800 to put it together, one would have thought Bayless could have done a bit more behind-the-scenes work to get at the heart of the tour.

There are some performances here, but rarely will you see any of the "headlining" acts on stage. Instead, there are snippets of groups like Opiate For The Masses and The Eyeliners that generally wouldn't turn many heads. The lone exception throughout the film has to be Silverstein's over-the-top performance, which is among the finest moments of the musical portions of the DVD. A close second would be Story Of The Year's scissor-kicking performance halfway through the documentary.

Although there are several shots of the road, buses on the road, and the people within those buses eating, drinking, and just shooting the breeze, the film comes to life briefly with scenes of Bayless heading back home. The moments here give you a glimpse into who Bayless really is and where his involvement in PETA2 originated. It also reveals his personal life, including a marriage to a fellow PETA activist that slowly and sadly fell apart. Meeting up with her on the tour provides some of the film's best and most poignant moments.



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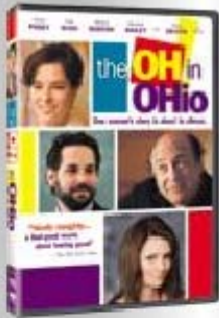


While Bayless doesn't get on his soapbox too often throughout, the Vans Warped Tour is more of a vehicle for him to spread PETA's message. The title of the documentary is a bit misleading at best. Yes, it is indeed a thoughtful, well-crafted glimpse into the Vans Warped Tour, but the music seems to be of secondary importance, here.

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

— 5 December 2006

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