



THE MENTORS EL DUCE VITA

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Review by Joe Viglione

The title of The Mentors DVD, *El Duce Vita*, combines the name for Federico Fellini's 1960 film *La dolce vita* - which is Italian for "The Sweet Life" - and a variation of "Il Duce", the term Benito Mussolini chose to convey his supremacy. But where Fellini had substance, style and an early performance from The Velvet Underground's Nico in his acclaimed work, this effort comes off like a bad college video project featuring in your face gross-out "humor" and The Mentors music, such as it is. On an historical level this has some value collecting the concept videos for their studio recordings on a DVD with forty-six additional minutes of three "bonus concerts, but as entertainment the joke wears thin when the boys leave nothing to the imagination during escapades with titles like "Golden Showers" and "Donkey Dick". "On The Rag" is equally disgusting and since even the most hardcore juvenile delinquent will find it difficult to sit through repeated viewings, why bother? Onstage they fare a little better, twenty-one minutes recorded in Minneapolis, Minnesota on September 11, 1991 at the 7th Street Entry proves they could at least throw a loud party. It's a dark, grainy video with vocals buried in the audio, though the guitars cut through showing the band as power trio had some elements of musicianship. El Duce/Eldon Hoke opens with "Peeping Tom" and helps it all quickly descend into the morass of off-key vocals and a heavy rock onslaught one might expect. Hoke is a good M.C. with his dirty jokes thrown like rose petals to the appreciative crowd, the group diving into "When You're Horny, You're Horny", a song comprised of pure filth that only followers of Larry Flynt's *Hustler Magazine* could appreciate. "Live In Austin Texas" has the group as a quartet with El Duce away from the drum kit and singing lead, the video much brighter, but with sound that is pretty much poor bootleg for this twelve and a half minutes. The final segment, *Live at The Country Club of Los Angeles*, takes up the last 13 minutes showing another aspect of the Mentors stage show. There are two dancing girls, rough audio and dark video along with what appears to be a fourth male in the band as backing vocalist. David Wayne says on camera "...No one wants to admit they're a Mentors fan, but everybody enjoys the hardcore sexual humor" before the DVD rolls into the Jerry Allen directed video, "Sex Slave". Duce, Wife Beater and Scum play their rock and roll with black hoods a la "Machine", the maniacal murderer from the Nicholas Cage film *8MM*, but the minimal hard rock with predictable X rated lyrics is so blatant it just isn't funny - not funny in the way that The Fugs made "Wide, Wide River" a melodic classic, or how the sophomoric humor of Indiana's The Gizmos - the very funny lyrics in "Muff Divin' In Wilkie South" - made the song catchy and worthy of a few spins. There's about 30 minutes of music and video

in the "movie", which includes male and female frontal nudity and extremely gross scenes which are done for effect - without subtlety, minus even a thought of some artistic or creative expression. It's more like X-rated out-takes from the film Animal House, plain and simple, and it gets pretty boring real quick. El Duce begins and ends the collection of their videos in a cardboard box on a beach reading his favorite skin mag while satisfying himself. To add to the "mystique" someone hands him a marijuana cigarette only proving this was a group in desperate need of Armand Schaubroeck as lyricist and producer. Or Jayne County with some decadent savoir-faire to make the gutter jokes somewhat appealing. El Duce Vita is the worst of G.G. Allin without the danger or the hype.

- Joe Viglione