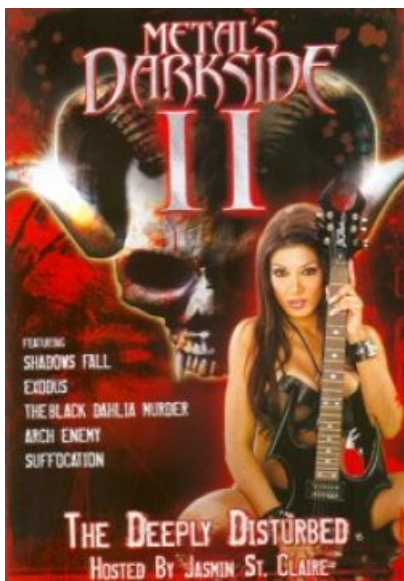


Reviews : Videos: Various Artists, "Metal's Darkside II (The Deeply Disturbed)"



Various Artists

Metal's Darkside II (The Deeply Disturbed)

[MVD Entertainment Group](#)

2007

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This is the second in a series of home-made Metal DVDs hosted by former porn star Jasmin St. Claire (who I remember from the Howard Stern Show on the E Network – I think she's the chick that did a giant gang bang video to gain quick notoriety). "Home-made" because it's shot mostly with handheld video cameras and has the type of audio and video problems that you'd associate with that sort of thing (although the audio problems are less apparent when Jasmin uses a microphone, which is about 1/3 of the time.) It's about an hour and a half long and features six 9-minute long interviews, five music videos, a three-minute long "Tribute to Metal Fans" (basically a modern day "Heavy Metal Parking Lot"), and "Jasmin's Asylum" where she answers e-mail questions from fans. There's a bit of a problem with how old some of this footage is (since band members have changed), but if you can view this as a "time capsule" rather than a "current feature", no harm done. Such is the nature of development time for DVD projects and the difficulty with maintaining a steady line-up for a metal band.

The interviews utilize a single camera and include Shadows Fall (backstage with bassist Paul Romanko and vocalist Brian Fair), Suffocation (in a club with guitarist Terrance Hobbs and vocalist Frank Mullen), Exodus (at the NAMM show with guitarists Gary Holt and Rick Hunolt), Deconstruct (at NAMM with bassist Vanessa, guitarist Joe and vocalist Skits), Arch Enemy (outside the tour bus with bassist Sharlee D'Angelo) and The Black Dahlia Murder (vocalist Trevor Strnad and guitarist Brian Escgbach). The camera work goes from static (Shadows Fall), to annoyingly busy (Suffocation) to competent (all the rest of them, give or take). Jasmin is an awkward host; looking at notes, being distracted by off camera action and just generally seeming a bit uncomfortable while at the same time trying to carry off the "I don't give a fuck" attitude, which came off as forced for me (but if she really doesn't give a fuck, I reckon she won't care). Maybe if these DVDs sell well enough and the show goes on, she'll get to spend enough time talking to a camera that she won't seem so uncomfortable (and a bit of rehearsal wouldn't hurt – hard to do for the interviews, but certainly the intro sections could have improved with a few more takes). St. Claire asks the

usual type of fluff questions that we're all familiar with (and pretty much cover the same territory that I would - which is why I don't do interviews): "Who writes the songs?", "Where have you been playing?", "What do you think about the scene?", "What style do you play?", "Any final message for the fans?" - you know the routine. The interviews are done in an informal off-the-cuff manor (despite the clipboard notes) and humor is involved (if you find the question "Who would you rather fuck - Barbara Bush or Janet Reno?" funny), so if you're just looking for some stupid fun, there's a bit to be had. Gladly some serious (albeit brief) conversation pops up occasionally as well. It would have been terrific had Jasmin spent more time discussing the issue of being a female in a metal band with Deconstruct bassist Vanessa - but at least they gave it cursory coverage. Perhaps it's something to focus on in the future if St. Claire could gather more gals to a round table discussion.

Besides the interviews, there are the videos. Suffocation's "Surgery of Impalement" (the band playing "live" in an abandoned building), Exodus' "War Is My Shepherd" (the group playing "live" on a Navy carrier), Deconstruct's "Deeper Down" (actual live footage from a show), Fight Paris' "Complete Heat" (more fake live footage accompanied by "Antics" at the drive-in theater - and why they're on a metal DVD is a mystery as they sound like post-grunge rock to me) and finally, Firewind's "Tyranny" (still more fake live stuff, this time filmed on a white background with computerized special effects). The videos do a good job of breaking up the interviews. The Suffocation tune is cool (loved Hobbs' old school solo), the Exodus song is great, Deconstruct sound like your typical hard rock commercial radio band, I've covered Fight Paris and the Firewind track is solid power metal with some nice guitar work by Gus G.

All that's left is the waste-of-time "Tribute To Drunken Metal Fans" and Jasmin's Q&A, filmed in a cemetery that makes her paranoid about ghosts and cops. Jasmin is likeable despite her nigh constant obsession with smelly armpits - something that Hunolt quizzes her about in one of the more humorous parts of the DVD. I don't understand the pheromone compulsion she thrives on - but to each their own. Body odor ain't my bag and fortunately my wife likes my perfumed, pretty-boy aromaed ass. St. Claire's affection for metal is cool (perhaps she'll figure out the difference between death, black and thrash at some point) and it's impressive that she's devoted enough to the cause to try to promote it. Whether or not this sort of thing is worth your hard earned scratch, you'll have to decide (I don't know if anyone would want to watch this multiple times). Do not expect Hollywood production values or insightful commentary and you'll have a moderately good time. With some more practice, Jasmin could be a great host - doing compelling interviews is fucking difficult, so she's chosen a hard row to hoe (no pun intended). I dunno - hopefully better things are to come, this being only the second shot at it.

D.Berger