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REVIEW

Music DVD Review: Stryper - *Greatest Hits: Live in Puerto Rico*



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Wow, Stryper. There is a name I have not heard in a long, long time. They were a band that had its fair share of fans in the 1980s, but they also caught a lot of flak for the music they made. They here a hair band playing pop metal, but that isn't what led to their notoriety — it was their faith.

Yes, that's right, they were a Christian band making music that did not try to hide their faith, they wrote songs that glorified God and was the antithesis of bands such as Slayer and Venom. Now, more than a decade out from their last album, 1990's *Against the Law*, the band reunited and took the yellow and black attack back on the road. Along the way, they recorded this concert in March 2004, now released their first ever live DVD.

I remember back in the 80's when I was but a wee lad just discovering music, one of the bands I was attracted to was, you guessed it, Stryper. I was intrigued by a band that sang for God and was in the rock genre that I was getting into. The music was a little flashy, punctuated by upper register vocal gymnastics, and was just different than the other bands I was listening to. It didn't hurt that I was, and am, a Christian. Well, as the years went by, I grew out of my hair metal phase, and my *To Hell With the Devil* and *In God We Trust* albums went by the wayside, collecting dust. I can honestly say I have not listened to a single Stryper song in well over a decade. That is, until I pressed play and watched this live recording.

As I watched, the concert memories of my childhood came flooding back. Now, I don't remember all of these songs, but there were plenty that I did, and the band was as tight as ever. The stage was covered in the traditional colors of yellow and black. The original four took the stage and broke into song. Gone is the gigantic hair, and probably much in the way of spandex clad dramatics, but their performance was spot on.

Frontman Matthew Sweet can still hit those high notes, his voice is powerful and he isn't shy about showing off his pipes. That leads to something that Stryper was always great at, and that is vocal harmonies, and even after all these years they still pull together nicely. Behind Sweet are guitarist Oz Fox, bassist Tim Gaines, and drummer Robert Sweet. They had great stage presence and the performance is first rate.



Something that should be noted is that the crowd was great. They were excited, sang along and were very welcoming. It is nice to see that they could still draw a crowd, and one this enthusiastic. I can imagine that Christian rock isn't exactly that popular, at least not that is this up front with the faith. It is a positive, uplifting experience. I am not saying they are the best at it, but there is something that is positive about the music and sometimes that is what you need.

The set list includes many of their better known tracks. They open with "Sing Along Song" which immediately gets the crowd involved. Other highlights include "Calling on You," "Free," "Loud and Clear," "Soldiers Under Command," "To Hell With the Devil," and "Honestly." Then there is the closer, which seems like an odd choice, a rocked up version of "Winter Wonderland." Huh? This is Puerto Rico in March, seems like a really weird way to close a set.

Naysayers say what you will, but the music Stryper wrote is good. There is a great melody to it, and the band are

adept at their instruments coming together to form a united musical front. The biggest complaint I have is that while their lyrics have a positive religious bent, the words often have a certain corniness to them, lacking subtlety, but they are still fun to sing along with.

Audio/Video. The video is presented in 1.33:1 and it looks pretty good, there may be a little haziness at times, but overall it looks good. Audio is presented stereo and surround, and they do the trick at conveying their music. Nothing to complain about.

Extras. The extras are a collection of live footage from 1989. The audio and video quality are not the greatest, but it is cool to see this footage from their heyday. Footage includes drum, guitar, and bass solos, and a trio of songs: "Keep the Fire Burning," "Always There for You," and "Rockin' the World."

Bottomline. If you, like me, have a soft spot of hair bands, are a Christian, or just like melodic pop metal, this is a disk that you may want to give a shot. They have great presence on the stage and still sound very good. This disk will be a welcome addition to the Stryper fan's collection.

Recommended.



Christopher Beaumont spends much of his time writing about entertainment when he isn't sitting in a movie theater. He is known around the office as the "Movie Guy" and is always ready to talk about his favorite form of entertainment and offer up recommendations. Interests include science fiction, horror, and metal music. His writings can be found at [Draven99's Musings](#), as well as [Film School Rejects](#).

Comments

#1 — April 20, 2007 @ 15:36PM — Mike Koehler [\[URL\]](#)

glad i preorderd this!! #1 Fan

#2 — April 22, 2007 @ 13:06PM — Rick

Just a little FYI, The name of the frontman is MICHAEL Sweet,not Matthew Sweet.

#3 — April 22, 2007 @ 13:42PM — JC Mosquito

Which came first - Stryper or John Belushi singing the blues and dressed as a giant bee on SNL? I mean, are there copyright issues here?

