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New music from
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palace of lights

Stryper: Greatest Hits- Live In Puerto Rico (DVD)

Let's all raise a hearty "Hails and Hosanna" for those Metal Messengers of the Most High for they have returned and released their first full concert DVD in the bands history. I know some of you Old Schoolers are saying that back in the day a live concert from Japan was released but that has never seen the light of DVD and is long out of print on VHS as well. Younger fans are saying "what's a VHS" but I digress. This concert was filmed in Puerto Rico back in March of 2004 and it finds a reunited lineup of Stryper performing the greatest hits from their albums in front of a very enthusiastic and appreciative crowd. During the "Hair Metal" years of the eighties Stryper was a band that ruled the video networks of MTV and were immediately recognizable from both their positive Christian message as well as their yellow and black spandex outfits. Today Stryper has abandoned the spandex costumes but the message and the music remains strong and sounds better than ever before. The DVD is a great way to catch up on these guys and what they are capable of musically and this is especially true if you only know of songs like "Honestly" or "Calling On You". There is certainly a lot more to absorb with this performance and you will soon find that in the concert setting that this is a band that sounds really, really good. I am confident that you will be impressed with just how good as a matter of fact. The show in PR was led up to with the band reuniting around their CD Best Of compilation "7: The Best Of Stryper"; it was a disc that found all tracks remastered and sounding very upfront as opposed to the original mixes. As the show plays it becomes clear that the members of Stryper are all kick ass musicians, and the vocal powers you hear on the records are not the result of any studio trickery. Lead singer/guitarist Michael Sweet will show that he can shred as much as lead guitarist Oz Fox while drummer Brother Robert Sweet (the visual timekeeper) mans a massive kit that he pounds relentlessly. He sits sideways if you didn't know and I have always felt that he was one of the best Hard Rock drummers to come out of the genre. Bass guitar is handled by Tim Gaines of course and the keyboards are done by Brent Jeffers. As many might know, Stryper viewed their music as a ministry and the band shows that their message is as serious as ever when they all stop performing to disburse bibles to the audience. They tell the crowd that they wish they could give one to everyone and you know that they mean it. During the show Michael periodically addresses the crowd about this being the reason that they are here and at all times seems as genuine as can be. No gimmicks or tricks here folks this is the real deal. Michael even prays with the audience at the end of the show.



I've always loved this band and found most of my favorites represented during the set. It was also nice to see this on DVD as I caught one of the reunion shows in New York when the band passed through town. Standout numbers are "Soldiers Under Command", "Loud And Clear" and "More Than A Man". I did find a couple of moments to be amusing like some of the fans making the traditional Metal "horns", which is not a normal sight at a Stryper show or at least none that I ever caught and the closer of "Winter Wonderland". Given this was filmed in March and in sunny Puerto Rico as well it might bring forth a chuckle despite it being a very sound and rocking cover of the Christmas classic. There are a handful of bonus live tracks and solos from 1989 since it shows the band as they were in their heyday (spandex and big hair for everyone). This great concert and its music will remind many of a special time in Metal history and that not all the music is dark, somber and loaded with sinister references. Since the DVD was filmed there have been some changes in Stryper, as bassist Tim Gaines has stepped down from the group and been replaced by Tracie Ferrie.

Track Listing

1. Sing Along Song
2. Makes Me Want To Sing
3. Calling On You
4. Free
5. More Than A Man
6. Caught In The Middle
7. You Won't Be Lonely
8. Reach Out
9. Loud And Clear
10. The Way
11. Soldiers Under Command
12. To Hell With The Devil

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