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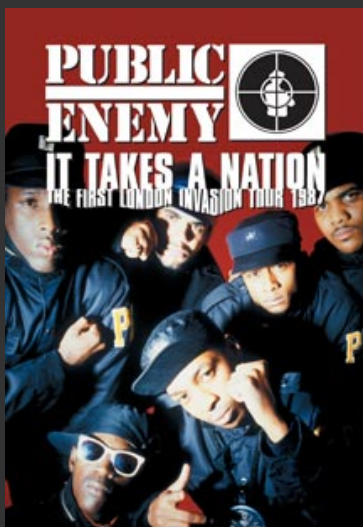
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DVD Review: P.E.: It Takes A Nation (1987)



Review By Todd E. Jones....A.K.A.....The New Jeru Poet

The true impact of Public Enemy can neither be denied nor disputed. Their complete intensity could never be fully documented. Albums, videos, and interviews were all powerful and influential. Forceful but uplifting, their live show took their power a step further. While some may think "Fear Of A Black Planet" as their most important album, many true PE fans consider "It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back" as their crowning achievement. Before the releases of the mythical LP, Public Enemy toured the world achieved hip-hop history. "It

Takes A Nation – The First London Invasion Tour 1987" DVD is not only a snapshot of their impact but is probably one of the most effective documents of their live performances, backstage antics, and insightful commentary. Many DVDs of older performances are horribly unclear since they just display the concert. This PE DVD's quality is based on sharp camera work (for the time), extra features, and Chuck D's commentary. Times have changed since the heyday of PE. Reagan is no longer president. Crack is not the only drug epidemic. Conscious hip-hop is now a huge sub-genre. Public Enemy may not be considered as important or as popular these days, but their influence and power will never be denied.

The actual concert footage sparks a wonderful feeling of nostalgia. The fact that London embraced the revolutionary group as they verbally jab Thatcher is testament to Public Enemy's power. Songs like "My Uzi Weighs A Ton" and "Bring The Noise" are just as compelling as they were in the 80's. The highlight of the concert is the finale of "Public Enemy #1". A signature theme,

the song's energetic live performance and bombastic sound remain just as severe as the original version. Flav's and Chuck's radiant on-stage energy is imaginatively efficient. Inspired by The Black Panthers, the S1W's have an authoritative presence that adds to the visual aspects of the live show. The choreographed military movements make the group official, potent, and profound.

DVD commentary is an unappreciated but entertaining and informative bonus to the medium. Chuck D's commentary maintains a balance of insightful PE history and salesmanship. Unfortunately, his multiple plugs get slightly annoying. Chuck repetitively remarks how the DVD is on sale, who distributes the DVD, and the film company's name. The true entertainment is evident in the little educational anecdotes. He enlightens listeners on how Flava Flav obtained and began wearing his trademark clock. He also talks about how he has matured as a live emcee. One insightful remark from Chuck is how he thinks PE represents his people. As a group, they represent different African-Americans. As Chuck may represent the strong minded militant thinker or activist, Flav represents the man embedded in street life who has a true wild side. From choosing different songs to discussing how certain songs were born out of freestyles, Chuck D's commentary is the highlight of all the bonus features and maybe even the entire DVD.

The quality of a DVD can be raised or debased by the bonus features. Since the London concert is only 1 hour long, extras are needed on this product. Besides the commentary, the bonus features are somewhat minimal but also satisfying. One feature is a 2003 concert in Australia. Although this Australian concert seems out of place since it is not from the 80's and is not set in Europe, the document stands as a testament to the group's evolution. A wonderful 2nd audio CD is another surprising addition. The CD includes the entire London concert, some remixes, and live recordings. A photo gallery is additional extra which will be viewed or appreciated once or twice.

Public Enemy is an essential brick in the foundation of hip-hop. "It Takes A Nation – The First London Invasion Tour 1987" DVD is an entertaining and enlightening document of the creative group's power. While the DVD is mainly for fans of the Public Enemy or the late 80's hip-hop era, open minded viewers may appreciate the revolutionary aspects. Hip-hop should thank Public Enemy for their contribution to the culture. While no document could ever completely capture the group's intensity, this DVD certainly comes close.

