



DVD REVIEWS



Leatherface: Boat In The Smoke

Starring: Leatherface
Studio: Music Video Distributors
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For those of you who have never heard of Leatherface before (the band, not the horror movie serial killer), here is a little bit of inside info to get you by on. Leatherface is an old-fashioned punk band that formed in the early 80's and who hail from a place in jolly old England by the name of Sunderland, Tyne, & Wear. Their sound is similar to the likes of bands such as Consumed or Good Riddance if fronted by Lemmy from Motorhead. The one thing that stands out the most is their lead singer, Frankie Stubbs harsh gravelly vocals. They are very distinguished and unlike any band that I have heard in the punk rock world to date. Leatherface did indeed take their name from the Texas Chainsaw Massacre's evil villain, Leatherface in case you were wondering. This DVD showcases a show from March of 2004 at the Camden Underworld in London.

Personally, I never followed Leatherface and had never really listened to anything other than a few songs of theirs on various compilations. I really didn't know what to expect of the band live. I figured that the London punk scene was vibrant and full of life and that this concert would be a showcase of the chaos and anarchy that would ensue. Nope. Didn't happen. Leatherface ripped through a couple of songs in a manner of minutes, but the crowd didn't seem to notice. Most audience members just stood around and slurped their beer. There was a pretty large crowd at the show and even a cool kid with a mohawk, but no one seemed to remember that they were there for a punk show. I was pretty disappointed by this occurrence. Nothing against the band...Leatherface played fast and hard and seemed to give it their all, but the crowd really sucked. It wasn't until the last two songs that the crowd finally reacted to the band and there were a few crowd surfers and a small mosh pit sited. It was a pitiful site. I'm sure that this particular crowd doesn't represent the entire London punk scene, but come on..you don't go to a punk show to stand around and talk to your friends. The notes that were included with the DVD stated that Leatherface was relatively unknown in their country even after 20 long years, but that they had a much larger following in the United States. Well then why was the show shot in London? If you have a bigger following in another area, wouldn't it make more sense to shoot your live DVD there? I was really disappointed with the crowd, and I felt that they didn't do the band or the DVD justice. There were a handful of negatives other than the crowd's lack of interaction. One, other than ripping through song after song, Leatherface didn't do much else. There was no witty banter or "FU's" between songs or anything of the such. Some bands do this and some don't. I like between song banter, but I guess it's just a matter of preference so no big deal. Two, sometimes Mr. Frankie Stubbs sounds like he's on death's door or had just inhaled a dust bunny. I felt that on a few occasions, the vocals were just awful. The only other problem that I had with this DVD was that it was 16:9 Widescreen format. First of all, I hate Widescreen anything. Secondly, I didn't know of any live DVD's that come in Widescreen format. I never knew this was even an option for a concert DVD. If I had attended the show, would I have seen it in Widescreen Panoramic Format or something? I didn't see the need to make it Widescreen. If it were Fullscreen, at least some of the lazy morons in the crown could have been cut out.

Boat In The Smoke wasn't that bad of a DVD. There were some positives to mention, not just

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negatives. The audio and visual quality was very good and the Underworld had pretty good lighting. The camerawork always seemed to be right on cue and looked very professional. That, along with the good lighting, provided the viewer with some good band shots and close-ups as well as glimpses of sweat flying all over the place. I was definitely impressed with the band and how well they played and how hard they seemed to work. If Leatherface came to town, I would catch them in a heartbeat.

There wasn't anything to write home about in regards to the extras. There was another club gig from 2001, but if you saw the main feature, there wasn't anything overly different about this show in particular other than hearing a few different songs. I did enjoy the interview with Frankie Stubbs and his particular view on the way things are.

Overall, not being a Leatherface fan before watching this DVD, I did take a liking to the band and their similar, yet unique sound. If you are a Leatherface fan, then you probably already have this DVD in your collection. If you're not that big into the band or have never even heard of Leatherface, you really wouldn't find anything spectacular or groundbreaking here. But then again...isn't that what punk is all about? Check out this DVD. It's worth the spare change.

Features:

Sunderland show: June 17, 2001

Interview with Frankie Stubbs, lead singer of Leatherface

Favorite Songs:

Little White God, Plastic Surgery, Dead Industrial Atmosphere

Rating: NR

Running Time: 108 mins

Extras Rating: ★★

Overall Rating: ★★★

Reviewer: Creature of War

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