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VITAL REMAINS

Live Evil Death
(MVD)

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VITAL REMAINS

Live Evil Death
(MVD)



Rhode Island small blackened/smoked death metal powerhouse Vital Remains deliver quite the alright performance in this their first DVD. But alright sometimes doesn't cut it. For fans of the band, *Live Evil Death* should be it; a fucking feast to satiate their thirst for brutality, the best, cleanest and crispiest document attesting the raw power of Vital Remains. Certainly, these dudes have no technical problems delivering blasphemous metal and the guitar tandem of Tony Lazaro and Dave Suzuki is one of the most outstanding in the underground, speeding through all of the nine tracks contained here like they are in a hurry to get to the bakery. Or the gym. The show is only accented by the numerous professional camera angles (the drummer is greatly ignored though), which when panned from afar reveals one obvious fact; strip death metal off all its gimmicks (of which Vital Remains have none) and it clearly belongs in a small stage. In a big venue, the power of the music is lost somewhere between the band, the audience and the tall ceilings. Plus, Lazaro and Suzuki are very low in stage presence with Lazaro focusing his eyes in his slashing riffing and Suzuki blowing his throat in every single chorus and offering truly tasty solos with each cut.

Recorded in Poland during the Metalmania Festival in 2007; *Live Evil Death* shows a small and dexterous death metal band running through a pretty convincing comprehensive set of death metal standards. And when I say standards I fully mean it. Ever since the band's inception in 1988 and since their first album *Let Us Pray* (1992) released through Peaceville, Vital Remains has failed to catapult itself to the big leagues. This could be due to two factors; their undistinguishable sound and their unstable line up. For these shows in Poland they had to resort to the vocal services of Damien Boynton (of Oregon's Desolation) who straddles the stage making ugly faces and walking around in a funny way; kinda like a dancing troll. Boynton of course, is replacing Deicide's Glen Benton, who is one of the greatest characters in death metal history, big shoes to fill for sure.

I much prefer the extras; an interview with both Lazaro and Suzuki revealing much of their history; here we learn that changes in line up are of no consequence, that these two are Vital Remains and the rest don't matter. We also learn that with each subsequent release Lazaro always thinks he'll be unable to surpass the brutality of the last record, but that each time he surprises himself and does it. We also learn that Suzuki is nearly a mute, all he does is move his head up and down for about thirty minutes. Also, we get a few minutes of Dave Suzuki playing riffs and solos and surprise, surprise, the man can talk. Dude can play alright, evidently much of the work that goes into his work gets lost by the sheer brutality of their songs. Check out the part where he plays "Dechristianize", baldy makes it seem so easy and then calls it straight forward. More interesting is the show at the Mega Club, which proves my point that brutal metal is, sounds and looks much better when played in a small venue.

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