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dvd reviews

GORGOROTH

Black Mass Krakow 2004
(Metal Mind)

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gorgoroth



GORGOROTH

Black Mass Krakow 2004
(Metal Mind)

Maybe I had heard so much blah blah about this concert that my expectations were set way too high. Or maybe underground music and the gimmicks that elevate it have gotten so extreme that is impossible for any metal fan to feel shocked anymore. As a result, the only way to impress is through awesome music, because unless you pull a ridiculous stunt like public immolation or limb mutilation I am simply not going to be shocked. Sure, a poop eating fest like those GG Allin used to indulge in back in the 80' is sure to leave a long lasting impression, but what he did is done and for the most part black metallers stay away from scatological activities. Usually, they leave those matters to death metallers and grindcore heads.

Norway's black metallers Gorgoroth are no strangers to controversy or gruesome activities. The band is led by Gaahl, a stoic man with the facial texture of a rock in erosion. Gaahl is inclined to intimidate people via his famous silent stare during which he manages to make the most common day into the most awkward snippet of your life. A couple of years ago he was convicted for beating a man. He had his reasons, he says. He lives usually isolated in a cabin in the Norwegian woods. He is a strange character, that's for sure. Most recently he turned a lot of heads by coming out of the closet and embarking in a new career as a fashion designer. Good for him. Satan can only do so much for your pocket and your ass.

But there has been turmoil in the Gorgoroth camp in recent years. The band was formed by guitarist Infernus back in 1992 and only one thing has remained constant; an ever shifting line up. For a while members of Obtained Enslavement, Satyricon and Emperor had brief stints with the band and it wasn't until 1998 during the recording of their first Nuclear Blast album *Destroyer* that Gaahl joined the fold. A year later after more changes in the line up brought bassist King Ov Hell and guitarist Tormentor into the fold, this would be the definite Gorgoroth line up. But in 2007, Infernus announced that the band was splitting with him on one side and Gaahl and King on the other. Both sides claimed rights to the name.

On February 1st, 2004, Gorgoroth played Kraków, Poland. Adorning the stage were sheep heads on stakes, satanic symbols, a barbed wire fence and two naked crucified models. To top it off, 80 liters of sheep's blood were poured conveniently. In a catholic country like Poland it was no surprise that the show would arise much controversy. The band's antics sparked a police investigation and all the fuss led to the band being dropped from the Nuclear Blast Tour. The nice folks at Metal Mind now bring that show to us via this DVD release. Does it live up to the hype? Yeah, if you are a fan of the band there is no way you'll feel disappointment. If you are not, then all the decoration in the world, no matter how gruesome and offensive, won't make you change your mind. For someone like me, who enjoys their music but does not place Gorgoroth all that high in the BM ranks, Black Mass Krakow barely cuts it. The music is there, played with fluidity and ease. Gaahl is up front spewing hatred with a caricature-esque voice and his wicked upside down cross made out of sticks. I just don't feel the energy, I wonder why so many black metal bands deliver their music with such contained furor. Unfortunately, despite all the fanfare Gorgoroth is not the exception.

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