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Dead End Drive-In: Now Showing - Dragon City: Punk Rock In China!



Written by Gaz E

Saturday, 23 November 2013 04:00

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Dragon City: Punk Rock In China! (2011 MVDvisual/Wienerworld)

A quick glance at the (decidedly cool) artwork wrapped around 'Dragon City: Punk Rock In China!' (now released in the UK via Wienerworld) and my mind was already racing to make comparisons to 'Wild Zero', the epic 1999 movie featuring Japanese garage rockers Guitar Wolf doing battle with zombies by way of the evil powers of rock 'n' roll. And, y'know what, the spirit behind this punk rock musical adventure made by the people across the East China Sea is pretty similar, even if everything else, from production values to running time, is but a shadow of that wolf-bitten and battered neo-classic.

'Dragon City' is the first punk rock movie to ever be produced in the People's Republic of China, so it's hard to be critical towards a project that has had to battle demons already to even get to the stage where people like me can write whatever the hell we like about our free copy. It's enough to make a journalist grow a soul, really.

Made by Darryl Pestilence, 'Dragon City' is set in a post-apocalyptic world of the near future, a world ravaged by greed and the lust for filthy lucre, so much so that money no longer exists, peace and civility also going the same way. The End, we are told, is The Beginning...

Famed Chinese punk rockers NoName play...umm...Chinese punk rockers NoName, a quartet of survivors scouring the wastelands in search of food and drink, doing their best to avoid murderous ghouls as they do. After witnessing a sloppy meat cleaver attack, and mistakenly drinking stale piss, the foursome meet a crazy US redneck; a bandana-wearing cracker who has been around the apocalyptic block a few times, losing his wife to the sickness that has infiltrated the grave new world yet happy to impart his knowledge to these punks.

After listening to the band's guitarist noodle acoustically as they sit around a makeshift camp fire, the dude leads them through the debris-strewn, abandoned streets to a building which houses, wait for it, a stage, lighting rig, PA, full drum kit, bass and guitars! And a straight micstand...and you know how hard they are to find at venues pre-apocalypse!

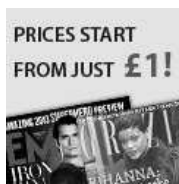
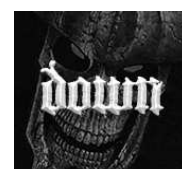
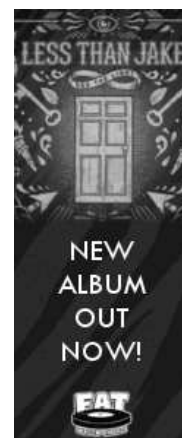
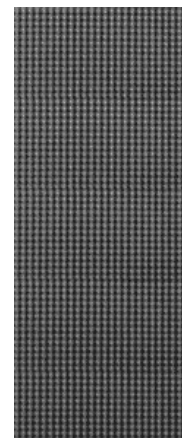
As NoName get up and start jamming, 'Outsiders' - survivors trapped between the ghouls and the quiet life - crowd around the outside of the building, wanting in and wanting punk rock!

"Hot damn," utters our bandana-clad hero, "now that's what I call music!"

The Outsiders are let in to watch NoName and, as the punk word gets around (not difficult in a hardly-populated wasteland, more and more survivors turn up to get their rocks off, each NoName performance looking more and more like a well attended gig. Actually, seeing how many people turn up I wouldn't be surprised to see a few modern venue owners praying for the apocalypse.

Things are rocking, the desperate have new reason to live, to survive...but wait....a key member of the cast is coming down with something....

'Dragon City' runs like an extended music video, the film itself barely touching the forty minute mark, and is a mish-mash of sparkling digital imagery and poorly lit video camera filming. It has a crazed album to it though, and if you had



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charm to it though, and if you had any kind of movie education by way of Lloyd Kaufman and Troma Entertainment - like me - then you will no doubt have a wholly different kind of appreciation for this film than your average Joe Somebody.

Labelled as a 'Special Edition', this disc - Region 0 NTSC - does come special feature-packed; over two hours of bonus features are included, in fact. Filmmaker-wise, a director's commentary is coupled with a bunch of Pestilence's short films and music videos for other bands, including ska punks Sucker who feature some NoName members and have obviously listened to a lot of Rancid. A load of NoName live performances round out the release, making this essential for fans of the band.

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