



ROLAND GUTH

## DVD & BLU-RAY PRIMAL FEAR



**EDGUY**  
*Monuments*  
NUCLEAR BLAST



**POWER METAL MAJESTY:** Compilation albums are often a dicey proposition for even the most respected and popular metal acts, but Germany's Edguy has never been a group that does anything in half measure. That being said, their 25th anniversary collection, *Monuments*, is just that—a monument to how many awesome songs Edguy has composed over the course of its formidable career. The power metallers have always possessed a knack for writing the most catchy metal tunes around, and *Monuments* is chock full of them, including five new tracks, totaling around a half hour of fresh material. These tracks are pedal to the metal for the most part, with "Open Sesame" perhaps being the most aggressive and energetic Edguy tune in quite some time. Elsewhere, classics from the band's enviable back catalog are also presented, showcasing just how well Edguy has measured up over the years in terms of consistency. This is thanks largely in part to frontman Tobias Sammet's charismatic voice, a fine balance of power and melodic poise. The band members are no slouches, either, sounding tight and in

charge as they kick out riffs and quick rhythms on this collection of classics and rarities. Add in a DVD of live material and video clips, and you have one satisfying value. *Monuments* makes an incredibly strong case for Edguy as one of the best power metal bands making the rounds today. Here's to the next 25 years. ~ *George Pacheco*



**FATES WARNING**  
*Awaken the Guardian Live*  
METAL BLADE



**CLASSIC ALBUM RELIVED:** Records aren't really given out as textbooks very often, unless, perhaps, it's for a music appreciation class, but Fates Warning's 1986 classic *Awaken the Guardian* should be issued to every musician who wants to try their hands at progressive metal. Prog is swelling at the seams right now, and any band worth their stock should be intimately familiar with this band's amazing third record. Last year, the *Guardian* lineup reunited to pay homage to the album's 30th anniversary, and their two shows performing the record in its entirety (as well as some other choice cuts) were momentous occasions now captured on a new set available in multiple

formats including CD, vinyl, DVD, and Blu-Ray. Like the record it celebrates, *Awaken the Guardian Live* should be required listening. The band, rejoined by vocalist John Arch for the first time in decades, played full sets for Keep It True XIX in Germany and Prog Power USA XVII in Atlanta, and they sound and look at the top of their game. From opener "The Sorceress" through other classics such as the amazing title cut "Prelude to Ruin" and "Giant's Lore," Fates Warning proved they maintain their muscle and power. The Keep It True set is better than the Prog Power performance, but not by much. This is a must-have collection for any Fates Warning acolyte or anyone in need of a proper introduction to real prog metal. ~ *Brian Krasman*

**THE PLASMATICS**  
*Live! Rod Swenson's Lost Tapes*  
MVD VISUAL



**REAL AND RAW:** The Plasmatics was a one of a kind group—a mixture of punk rock, heavy metal, and performance art, all guided by the lightning rod frontwoman Wendy O. Williams. Although Williams is no longer with us—having tragically taken her own life back in 1998—her legacy lives on in this collection of rare archival footage. *Live! Rod Swenson's Lost Tapes* is just that—raw and ugly footage culled from the early days of the band's career, playing gigs at clubs like New York's iconic CBGB. The video footage is grainy and out of focus at times, but this is all part of the charm, as The Plasmatics was never one to be concerned with sounding pretty or clinical. Instead, this release serves largely as a snapshot of the time, with crowd shots and band performances reflecting the anything goes policy of punk rock during the late 70s and early 80s. At the center of it all is Wendy O. Williams—a whirling

dervish of demolition and activity, at once hyper sexual, forcefully aggressive, and always captivating. She was truly one of a kind, and *Live! Rod Swenson's Lost Tapes* from The Plasmatics serves as a fitting tribute to Wendy O. Williams doing what she did best—performing on stage for her adoring fans. ~ *George Pacheco*

**PRIMAL FEAR**  
*Angels of Mercy – Live in Germany*  
FRONTIERS



**METAL IS FOREVER:** While it seems not that long ago that Primal Fear released a live DVD, *16.6 All Over the World* was seven years ago already. The approach taken on stage by Primal Fear has not changed much, utilizing a minimalist setup to keep the focus on the band and the propulsive music. Often lumped in with the power metal scene, Primal Fear has a harder edge and a more classic heavy metal method that sounds not unlike *Painkiller* era Judas Priest crossed with modern day Accept at its heaviest. Vocalist Ralf Scheepers has been delivering his patented scream in various bands for over 30 years, and yet he still sings as powerfully and with the same incredible range here on *Angels of Mercy – Live in Germany* as ever. The rest of the band is just as impressive, and the playing sounds so tight, it could almost be a studio recording. Although filmed in the band's homeland, the crowd doesn't seem to be especially frenzied and the venue itself is rather stark and not much to look at. Still, Primal Fear delivers its usual 100 percent, pounding out classics and new tracks with the energy and clear sense of joy the band is known for. It's nothing special visually, but the performances and diverse set list make *Angels of Mercy – Live in Germany* another Primal Fear release well worth getting. ~ *Daniel Hinds*