



Some must see music docs

By: Craig Gilbert, Staff Writer
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Sing along with us!

The holidays are coming and the goose is getting fat.

And you need to get some presents; some of this and lots of that. Someone on your shopping list wants music dvd's.

So scare them or enthrall them with one or all of these.

Traa-la-freakin'-la.

KISS Loves You

Music Video Distributors (www.mvdb2b.com), 2007, directed by Jim Heneghan.

Ever see the documentary centered on the seemingly odd lives and travels of Star Trek fans called Trekkies? As fans of "the Trek" are sometimes a bit, shall we say, intense, the fans of KISS are just as rabid. KISS Loves You, a film 10 years in the making, follows the paths of some die-hard KISS followers during the time frame of 1994 to 2001. For you non-KISS fans those are the years that the band took off its trademark makeup, disappointed many of its fans, saw a decline in record sales and quite honestly began to suck. They went from putting out records of heavy, super hero-esque rock to paltry paint by numbers albums with one catchy song if you were lucky. But during this "down time" period of flux there was one constant; the fans.

The film picks up in '94 with the beginning of the impromptu KISS conventions thrown by fans and collectors. Hair, sleeveless denim jackets and fanatical looks of devotion fill the interviews. One such fan, though a bit more subdued, is Bill Baker. Bill, a guitar player and front man in an Ace Frehley tribute band (I'm not shitting you) called Fractured Mirror has, through perseverance and near idol worship, formed a pseudo friendship with Frehley. Baker, along with the Ventrice family (aka The KISS Family) and a few KISS tribute acts are followed exclusively through the seven-year KISS hourglass, each year documented as the band slowly builds towards its grand resurgence in 2001 with a reapplication of the makeup and a reunion tour. As each fan tells their tale and each celebrity regales their own KISS tale (Handsome Dick Manitoba of The Dictators, Dee Snider, Todd Youth of Chrome Locust and countless NYHC bands) there is an underlying current of ill about the more grounded folks. Are KISS really a bunch of rich, self-absorbed, egocentric douche bags?

It almost feels that way from the behind the scenes footage (a key example of this is Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley storming a KISS convention and removing articles for sale saying they were stolen and belonged to them....then promptly bolting and ignoring the crowd). Getting to know what the band's about by filming the fans is a great and revealing technique. Another telling bit of info is the back of the dvd case which informs that the film "is not authorized or approved in any way.." by the dudes in the band. Hmmm. So what is to become of the fans that are featured? What ever happened to the plaque that little four-year-old Anthony Dentrice had made and gave to Paul Stanley? What will tribute bands Hotter Than Hell or Dressed To Kill do when their musical masters slap on the greasepaint again?

The disc ends with the KISS press conference on the USS Intrepid announcing their reunion return and the answers to most of the questions about the regular folks in the film. If this telling and well compiled doc weren't a pleasurable enough viewing experience, then watching the special features section is the cigarette after the climax. Deleted scenes and editing room floor interviews add even more light to the personalities of KISS (the Dick Manitoba scene is one of the greatest moments retold in rock and roll history). A great documentary that is a solid watch, occasionally sad, filled with great fan footage, subtly funny and tongue-in-cheek informative. Definitely a fan must-have.



[Gettin' Some @ Anna Liffey's](#)



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The Cramps: LIVE at the Napa State Mental Hospital

Music Video Distributors (www.mvdb2b.com), 2004.

Bootlegs of this show have been floating around for years. And yes...what you see's is what you get's. It's everybody's favorite black leather, ghoul-a-billy band The Cramps playing at a mental institution back in the summer of 1978. The footage is a bit rough and the sound drops at times. But it's that footage that is so beautifully amazing. Now before you leap off the handle and start screaming about exploiting the "feeble-minded" or whatever P.C. term is used or not used, just watch the entire hour-long disc.

The folks who reside in the hospital are having a one helluva good time with the band. They're all dancing and singing along and just unleashing a six pack of "yee-fuckin'-haw" up in the place. Patients jump on stage sing along with singer Lux Interior, sometimes just wailing and shrieking to their hearts content. And the band is fully accepting and smiling along with everyone; no judgments passed.

They are right there along with the patients; for them, one of them. As Interior says at the beginning of the show, "Somebody told me you people are crazy! But I'm not so sure about that; you seem to be all right to me." Exploitive? No. One of the oddest and truly most honest rock shows ever captured on film? Oh hells yes. www.targetvideo.blogspot.com

American Hardcore: The History of American Punk 1980-1986

Sony Picture Classics (www.sonyclassics.com/americanhardcore), 2006, directed by Paul Rachman.

Author Steven Blush penned the book American Hardcore: A Tribal History which set up the inspiration for this film. It's a documentary taking the watcher through the earliest years of American punk rock. The '77 punk rock explosion (primarily started by The Ramones and The Clash and The Sex Pistols) morphed into hardcore; a faster, angrier, louder, more...well, "hardcore" version by the 1980's. The music, fashion and lifestyle shifted into that edgier style and spread in a few short years as bands formed, toured, put out 7-inch records and connected with like-minded punks across the country. Stationary pogo dancing and skinny ties evolved into torn home-made band shirts and fist flailing slamming. And American Hardcore captures all that change beautifully in visuals and dialogue. The disc is overflowing with archival footage of bands like Black Flag, Bad Brains, Minor Threat, Negative Approach and gobs of other monumental favorite punk personalities as they tell you all about what it was like back in the day. Interviews with the groups and influential individuals fill in the space between the show clips and add an extremely intense and personal insight into the scene at that time. I mean, these are the people who not only were there but they created the origins of "the scene" that exists today. A downside to the disc might be the over-focus on "hot spots" at the time or the scenes that became Mecca-like with time (i.e. L.A. and D.C.). But that's a minor gripe. Made for fans of the music (non-believers would probably be bored or frightened), the dvd offers a dive into the crowd of what it must have been back then. Simply watching Harley Flanagan of the Cro-Mags talk about the Bad Brains and seeing the adrenalized passion he exudes describing the music is the reason behind this disc. Pure, ugly at times, uncut fucking passion.

Old-sters that remember that time will really dig the obscure videos and interviews along with the history while newbies can find out where the D.I.Y. Network got it's name, what Henry (Garfield) Rollins was doing before he became an author/actor/talk show host and where today's so-called "hardcore" bands spawned from. www.sonyclassics.com/americanhardcore

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