



Shared Darkness

A Communal Life in Film and DVD, Examined

[• Back to Main Page](#)[• Quicksearch](#) Include comments

November 2007

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

[• Category Archives](#)

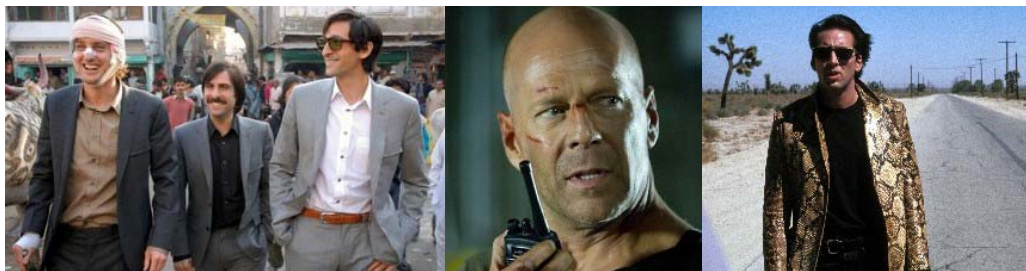
- [Amusements \(44\)](#)
- [DVD Reviews \(447\)](#)
- [Ephemera \(506\)](#)
- [Film Reviews \(254\)](#)
- [Interviews \(164\)](#)
- [Irritations \(67\)](#)
- [Musings \(236\)](#)
- [Old Made New \(38\)](#)

[• Recent Comments](#)

1. Marlon on [On God and Stephen Baldwin](#)
11/21/2007
2. Classy on [Rachel Nichols Brings the P2 Cleavage](#)
11/20/2007
3. Proud Sleazebag on [Teen Box Office Sex Appeal](#)
11/19/2007
4. Marsha on [Happy Birthday, Sam Rockwell](#)
11/19/2007
5. Rachel on [Evan Shows Environmental Concern](#)
11/14/2007
6. Anonymous on [Happy Birthday, Emmy Rossum](#)
11/14/2007
7. CIO-2 on [Advance Thoughts on The Mist](#)
11/13/2007
8. Amanda on [Moore Thoughts on Dedication](#)
11/13/2007
9. Kevin Karstens on [Advance Thoughts on The Mist](#)
11/12/2007
10. CIO-2 on [Advance Thoughts on The Mist](#)
11/12/2007

[• Monthly Archives](#)

- [November 2007 \(45\)](#)
- [October 2007 \(91\)](#)
- [September 2007 \(99\)](#)
- [August 2007 \(112\)](#)
- [July 2007 \(110\)](#)
- [June 2007 \(104\)](#)
- [May 2007 \(82\)](#)
- [April 2007 \(74\)](#)
- [March 2007 \(61\)](#)
- [February 2007 \(67\)](#)
- [January 2007 \(79\)](#)
- [December 2006 \(61\)](#)
- [November 2006 \(69\)](#)



Kiss Loves You



This entry was posted on 11/16/2007 5:45 AM and is filed under [DVD Reviews](#).

There's a pinch of the voyeuristic, slack-jawed amazement that made John Heyn and Jeff Krulik's landmark 1986 short *Heavy Metal Parking Lot* such a wild sub-cultural curio in Jim Heneghan's *Kiss Loves You*, a fascinating look behind the curtain of probably the best-marketed band of the past quarter century. There's also a slight reminiscence to 1997's *Trekkies*, a documentary which explored a similarly fervent fan group. Put it all together, and you have a briskly paced nonfiction flick treat that plays well to audiences both wide and narrow.



Kiss Loves You starts out as a bit of a piece of agitprop. Heneghan (the Hellcats documentary *Goodnight, Cleveland*), though, smartly makes sure the film isn't just some rah-rah document. A decade in the making, *Kiss Loves You* captures the reality of fanatical fandom, but also the cold actualities of the fact that sometimes getting what one wishes for has unintended consequences. The film begins in 1994, when Kiss was at a career low point, and fans around the world were starting their own tribute bands, uniting at unofficial Kiss conventions and growing increasingly more nostalgic for the 1970s era class Kiss line-up. Cannily in tune with and poised to exploit this shift in zeitgeist, frontman Gene Simmons and the band responded in 1996, **rising up like a grease-painted phoenix and ushering in a new era of success... particularly on the marketing front**. On the surface, this was a Kiss fan's dream come true, but for some folks the return of their idols brought unexpected losses and harsh new problems.

Kiss Loves You delves into unofficial Kiss conventions and tribute band gigs for a wealth of information, conducting interviews with average folks to get to the core of a typical Kiss fan's devotion, which obviously extends far beyond any mere affinity for the music. Other interviewees range from Bill Baker and the entire small town Ventrice family to musicians like Dee Snider, Todd Youth and Dictators frontman Dick Manitoba. The music rocks, but Simmons and cohorts Paul Stanley and Ace Frehley come across as crassly tunnel-visioned businessmen on a certain level. **The real point: Kiss loves the fact that you love them.**

Housed in a nice slimline case with a plastic tray, *Kiss Loves You* is presented on a region-free disc in a letterboxed 4x3 aspect ratio, its picture elements drawn from a hodge-podge of sources, including 16mm, analog video and Super-8 footage. **The feature itself runs just over 70 minutes, but Heneghan complements the film with a hearty array of bonus material**, including never-before-seen (though soundless) footage

- [October 2006 \(62\)](#)
- [September 2006 \(51\)](#)
- [August 2006 \(75\)](#)
- [July 2006 \(67\)](#)
- [June 2006 \(57\)](#)
- [May 2006 \(53\)](#)
- [April 2006 \(56\)](#)

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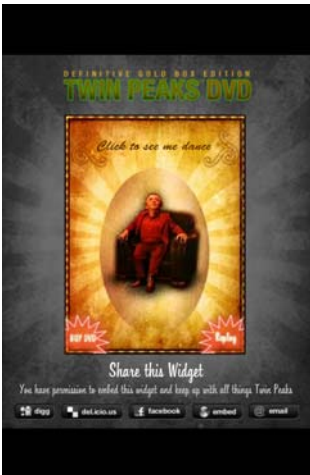
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of Kiss in Stockholm in 1976; material from the Beyond Vaudeville Kiss Spectacular, a New York City public access cable program; extended footage from the band's comeback press conference aboard the USS Intrepid (!); and more than an hour and a half of candid outtakes and excised movie material. [To purchase the film via Amazon, click here.](#) **B (Movie) B+ (Disc)**

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