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Vader - And Blood Was Shed in Warsaw DVD



By Mike Korn

I can personally vouch for how devastating the Polish war machine Vader is live. I caught them on their 2006 American tour with Kataklysm and Destruction, where they laid a hellacious thrashing on all present. That's the sort of performance you'll see on the concert portion of this video, recorded in February 2007 at the Stodala Club in Warsaw, Poland...ground zero of the Vader explosion.

It may be blasphemous to say it, but I think Vader is what Slayer have claimed to be for the last decade. They are faster, heavier and with their leader Peter in command, more charismatic than the Californians, who spend long periods resting on their laurels between records. No such problem exists for Vader, who are seemingly always on tour somewhere or recording their next devastating opus.

And Blood Was Shed in Warsaw is an excellent video document of the band. I'm amazed at the stage lighting and production Vader gets in Europe. The light show for this concert is fantastic and can hold its head up with Iron Maiden, Judas Priest or, of course, Slayer. After an ominous symphonic intro, the band rips into opening cut "Shadowfear" and it's no-holds-barred death metal from there to the concluding blast of "Wyrocznia." The visual approach to the concert is kind of unique. The camera movements are flowing and slower than the usual jumpy quick cuts. The long hair of all the members seems to float around their heads as if blown by a perpetual gale. When combined with the strong pink, red and blue lighting, it creates a surreal effect. As the concert goes on, the cuts do become quicker and the lighting often is blood red or pure electric white.

Guitarist/singer Peter commands the stage like an army general. His guttural vocals are like a demonic call to arms and his headbanging technique is confident and assured. For lovers of lead soloing, there's a lot to like here. I dig how the camera zooms in for a close-up of Mauser or Peter's supple fingers as they play a solo...you get to see all the intricacies of their fingering technique. I also admire the strong "helicopter hair" thrashing of all the guitarists. In my opinion, metal musicians should always have long hair to whip around...it just seems that much cooler.

The tunes themselves are all brutal, epitomizing the Slayer-meets-Morbid Angel style of Vader. My favorites are the epic "Warlords," the tyrannical blast beating of "Blood of Kingu" and the killer medley of "This Is the War," "Lead Us" and "What Color Is Your Blood?" - all from their latest album *Impressions in Blood*. "Predator" shows the guys can be just as crushing in slower mode, but the concert ends with a furious "Wyroczenia," featuring Orion of Behemoth on lead vocals. It's a very cool tune that starts almost like a lost Judas Priest track before ending in a Slayer like thrash flurry.

The concert in itself is well worth getting the DVD for, but there's more. Most interesting is a long interview with Peter, conducted in Polish but with English subtitles. This man is focused, intelligent and well-spoken...it's no trouble believing that Vader has outlasted a lot of troubles with him at the helm. Especially affecting is his discussion of the late Vader drummer Doc, who struggled against substance abuse and lost. The interview is a great look into the mind of one of death metal's strongest spokesmen and well worth checking out.

In addition, there are two promo videos. "Sword of the Witcher" is exclusive to this DVD and shows the band in full medieval gear delivering a mid-paced song while scenes from "The Witcher" video game are woven in. "Hellelujah(God Is Dead)" is the most infamous song from *Impressions in Blood* and has an equally infamous video, full of religious symbolism.

When you toss in photo galleries, a detailed band history and a discography, it all adds up to a very thorough package for the Vader fan. These guys have been playing in one form or another since 1986, well before communism fell in Poland. See the power and passion that enabled them to do this on *And Blood Was Shed in Warsaw*.

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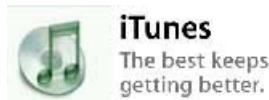
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