

MUSIC DVD

VARIOUS ARTISTS

'iCrusher'
'Immortalised - The DVD'
'Earache My Eye'
EARACHE/MVD

You can picture Earache boss Digby after a long hard day at the office, coming home, feeding the cat, getting into his favourite easy chair, pouring a large gin and tonic and sifting through the family videos to compile this little lot. What is less clear is why Earache are deciding that now is the time to reissue this compendium of their great and not-so-great alumni – okay cynics, don't write in; it might be financial. But hey, anyone who hasn't heard of YouTube will be ecstatic with this lot.

'iCrusher' [6.5] has the most to sift through, and consequently it captures the best and worst of the label. You all know what the best is – Carcass' performance brings tears to our putrescent, cataract-ridden eyeballs, while Napalm Death's brings back warm memories of invading the stage and feeling like a complete prick when you realise jumping off the thing will probably hurt, a lot. The worst are far more noteworthy. Autonomy and Linea 77 providing the bottom of a barrel that even Mortis wouldn't scrape with his big, stupid nose. 'Immortalised' [7] and 'My Eye' [7.5] are more concise, and though you wouldn't want to own both of them, each have their highlights and laughably crap videos. The good? Sleep's 'Dragonaut' is a menace to cigarette papers everywhere, while Morbid Angel's David Vincent looks as if he'd eat your children with chips and peas. The *Palm D'Or*, however, goes to Lee Dorian for his cavorting with the undressed in Cathedral's paean to Matthew Hopkins. Altogether now, "Ooh yeah!"

JONATHAN HORSLEY

wondering why your genitals have turned orange. Fear not: At least at home – unless you live with Terrorizer veteran Paul Schwarz – the fear of getting impaled by a drinking horn is negligible. And you can pause it when Christina Scabbia (or Abbath; it's your call) is shaking her buns. 2007 was quite a vintage: Sodom; Immortal; Sacred Reich; Possessed etc... Notable omissions from the DVD include Municipal Waste and In Flames, but after an eyeful of sweaty Grutle you can't really complain. It's just like being there, honest. Oh, and the discs are scratch and sniff efforts that smell of the loos. Well, not really. That'd be too much. Even for The Schwarz.

[8] JONATHAN HORSLEY

GORGOROTH

'Black Mass Krakow 2004'
METAL MIND

At Terrorizer, we set the bar for blasphemy pretty high. And c'mon, you only need to miss mass once to fall foul of the Polish authorities, so the fact that Gaahl and comrades found themselves banned and censored for this evening of histrionic evil doesn't really say much. In all fairness though, this is harsh, nasty, spiteful stuff. And sure, Gorgoroth – with their personnel troubles and their stoic defence of Antichristian rhetoric do set themselves up for ridicule – but their live show featuring sheep heads and crucified nudists (swoon, a real vagina! You don't see them in the forest), has an atmosphere that is just so *anti*. And atmosphere, as we all know, is a huge part of what BM is all about. With Gaahl as the focal point of nihilism, flanked by the execrative thrash riffs of Infernus and Apollyon, this is documentary evidence of why Gorgoroth are Christbaiters *extraordinaire*. There's no dialogue during a set that moves with clinical vitriol, illuminated in scarlet.

Gorgoroth may lack the sweeping grandeur of Emperor, and are less necro than Darkthrone, but their grasp of the demonic dynamic emboldens them with a singular conviction that leads all unto temptation, and to the true darkside.

[9] JONATHAN HORSLEY

VARIOUS ARTISTS

'Sweden Rock Festival'
BOB MEDIA

Much like the camel, Sweden Rock Festival was designed by committee: how else can anyone explain Vixen sharing a stage with Behemoth? Oh, and all those Bret Michaels-a-likes that kept the banner flying for the decade that liked to drink Schlitz and wear shoulder-pads.



Y'know the sort; old troopers that look like they've been fashioned out of some old man's Ronseal-coated scrotal skin and held together by chiffon bandanas. That aside, this is an entertaining mixed bag culled from 2005 and 2006's performances. There are some great moments: Alice Cooper is the fucking man; Motörhead rule, okay; Venom have Satan's back; and Diamond Head woz there. Elsewhere you have the magnificently named From Behind gorging themselves on rock clichés and Vixen bingeing on hairspray, all playing before an audience that appear to have devoured a plate piled high with tranquilisers on entering the festival site.

[6.5] JONATHAN HORSLEY

FILM DVD

'I'M A CYBORG'

Dir: Park Chan-wook
TARTAN ASIA EXTREME

The director of 'Oldboy' and 'Lady Vengeance' makes a romantic comedy? That might seem a little incongruous, but 'I'm A Cyborg' isn't your average feelgood, boy-meets-girl fare; we're talking Park Chan-wook after all.

Young-goon (played by Lim Soo-jung) believes she is a cyborg and ends up in an institution. Here she meets Il-soon (Korean pop star 'Rain' Jung Ji-hoon) who becomes fascinated by the new patient. What follows is a brilliantly dark comedy, relating a fantastical story in the vein of 'Amelie', 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest' and weirdly 'The Terminator' – indeed, Arnie could only dream of the fire power possessed by Young-goon.

Park Chan-wook has once again made a fascinating and thought-provoking film, not quite as effective as 'Oldboy' but a convincing entry in his *oeuvre* nonetheless.

[8.5] ALEX BONIWELL

'DEATH NOTE VOL 2'

Dir: Tetsuro Araki
MANGA

The war of bluff, double bluff and even triple bluff continues between investigator L and Light Yagami (aka Kira, killer of criminals

and holder of the fabled Death Note). But to screw things up just that little bit more, a second Kira appears, and both L and Light need to seek out this interloper in order to continue their battle. The plot twists and turns, as it does in many an anime, but 'Death Note Vol 2' remains interesting and intriguing as the turns take unexpected journeys. L and Light become allies of sorts and their relationship puts a huge strain on Light's father, the head of the Kira investigation team; understandably, he isn't keen on his son being a suspect.

'Death Note Vol 2' suffers from its tendency to go over the plotlines every ten minutes just in case the viewer is having difficulty keeping up; nevertheless, it's unquestionably an entertaining and engrossing experience.

[7] ALEX BONIWELL

'SMALL TOWN FOLK'

Dir: Peter Stanley Ward
DNC

The 'small' in the title of this New British horror comedy could be said to refer to the budget (less than four thousand pounds, entirely funded by the cast and crew over a four year period) or to the star, sci-fi and horror legend, Warwick Davis ('Return Of The Jedi', 'Willow'). Thankfully for such a labour of love, the film is big on laughs, eeriness... and blood.

The story is not groundbreaking; a mysterious village, unmarked on a map, is home to a gang of related-in-too-many-ways simpletons. This gang, who range from slimy to irritating, go looking for women with whom to breed. At the very least, this produces a scenario in which hitherto unanswered questions such as, 'What would a porno from Royston Vasey be like?' are fully addressed.

Forced to escape the clutches of this sinister clan and the cabalistic hamlet of Grockleton, are a kindhearted local boy who chomps on biscuits instead of smoking cigarettes, and a couple embarking on an adventure but ending up living their own version of 'Deliverance'.

While hardly brilliant, the dialogue being funny through

poorness rather than wit, and the knowing nods to genre stalwarts such as 'The Texas Chainsaw Massacre' being a tad obvious, 'Small Town Folk' remains a jaunty way to spend an hour or so. The limited budget has forced the clever and thoughtful use of lighting and prosthetics to best effect, and as a result, the film can boast genuine suspense and an iridescent creepiness that lingers long after the credits stop rolling. On the strength of this debut, director Peter Stanley-Ward is certainly one to watch.

[6] EMMA GRITT

BOOKS

'KIRBY: KING OF COMICS'

Mark Evanier
ABRAMS

Even if you don't know Jack Kirby by name, you will know his art. As Neil Gaiman notes in his introduction to this lavishly illustrated biography, it is art that seethes with raw power – jumping out at you like an inexplicable static shock from pages that never seem to sit still. Kirby's art always had this: We see it even in sketches from 1934, which depict 'celebrities' of the day including Joan Crawford, Joseph Stalin and Benito Mussolini. Kirby would go on to have the longest and most productive career of any American comics artist short of Will Eisner, but the vibrancy of his work isn't the aspect that justifies his claim the title 'King Of The Comics' – a nickname he accepted "always with a twinkle", as author Evanier explains in his preface. No, Kirby is remembered as 'The King' because he was an 'ideas factory'. Always on a mission to 'get things done', Kirby began innovating even before he had returned from serving under Patton during that "one minor detail" which marred what he considered the best time of his life, the early '40s; and it was only in the late '80s, with his eyesight failing, that he began to wind down.

Telling Kirby's remarkable, era-spanning story in an economical style The King would have appreciated, Evanier's writing has warmth (he became a Kirby family friend) yet does not lack balance. Without resorting to footnotes – but, helpfully, including an index – Evanier covers all the necessary bases without diluting a magical narrative that encompasses the creation of many of the most enduring hero figures of the twentieth century. If there is one 'coffee table book' every home should have, this is it.

[9] PAUL SCHWARZ