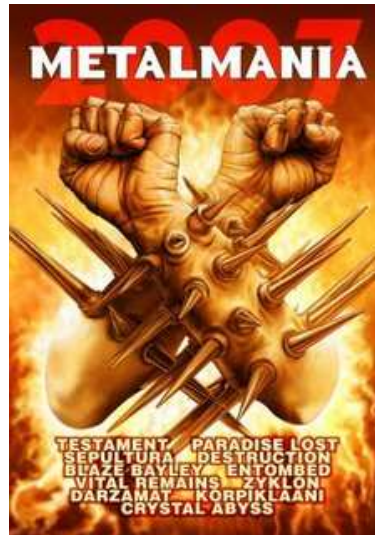




Thursday, May 15, 2008

Various - Metalmania 2007 [DVD and bonus CD]

Band: Various
Title: Metalmania 2007
Genre: Concert/Performance
Release: 5/13/2008
Distributor: MVD Visual



Throw your horns up and start banging your head, here come our METALMANIA 2007 review.

This is an amazingly well made DVD of the METALMANIA 2007 performance at Spodek, Katoewice (which is in Poland, thanks wikipedia!). It's a multi-camera shoot, which means you get all the angles of the show. There's some great shots from right up front, behind the drums, all around the stage, and my favorite, the epic crane shots that pan over the whole crowd before zooming in to the stage. The DVD menu is awesome, along with the cover art. This is how concerts are meant to be filmed.

The sound quality is perfect. The main mix is run strait to the camera, and theres a good mix of crowd noise as well. All the performers are on top of their game. The highs are squealing and the lows are booming. Epic.

All the performances are entertaining. You get about 2 songs per band, except for Testament, which has almost their whole set, with great reason. Testament's performance may be one of the best of their careers.

This DVD is exactly what every concert DVD should be. On top of that, I saw enough hair windmills to power a religion killing factory for 100 years.

Written by: Justin Proper
DVD Grade: 8/10
CD Grade: 7/10

Labels: dvd, metalcore, metalmania, mvd visual, various artists, various core

posted by James and Meaghan @ Thursday, May 15, 2008 0 comments

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Under The Gun Review[Find It!](#)**About Us**

Names: James and Meaghan

Location: Michigan

Emails:

info@underthegunreview.net

utglocal@underthegunreview.net

See my complete profile

Previous Post**Mortification - Conquer The World [DVD]**

Band: Moritfication
Title: Conquer The World
Genre: Concert/Performance
Release: 5/13/2008
Distributor: MVD Visual



If you just watched this DVD and had to guess when it was made, I guarantee you'd be wrong. The graphics and effects are right out of the early 90's, which is terrible considering the DVD was shot in 2001. You can argue that the budget was low, but that doesn't excuse the poor production quality of this DVD. I honestly think that you could have paid me \$50 to just do the menu and graphics, and it would have looked 20 times more professional and visually appealing.



The actual footage and camera work falls right in line with all the graphics. This DVD seriously might have been shot on a VHS camcorder. Not only that, but all the footage is from either side stage, or way in the back. Here's how I think the conversation went, as far as camera work: "Hey roadie #2, want to record our show?" "Ummm....sure I guess, I've never used a camcorder before though." "That's ok dude, I'm sure it'll look great." They couldn't be more wrong.

On to the music. I'm not a big fan of the older Christian death metal scene, so I'm not going to review the bands music. Instead, I'll review the audio on the DVD. Half the time they just edited live footage to CD cuts. There was no attempt to sync up the performance to the music. None. Not even a little bit. And that was the good part. The other half of the time they use what sounded like one microphone set back by the soundboard to record the band. This is terribly low quality audio, and really shouldn't be. It would have been really easy to actually have the audio tech run another line out to the camera, and set up a crowd mic.

The only slightly redeeming quality to this DVD is the loads of behind the scenes footage. There is so much of the band just hanging out and interacting with people all across the world. It's really interesting to see these guys, just because they're kind of off the wall. You get to see one of the band members get a tattoo. But the best part is watching the lead singer get his nipple pierced. Wait... maybe that's the worst part...

All in all I wouldn't recommend ever watching this unless you're a die hard Mortification fan, and even then it would be better just to go to a show.

Written by: Justin Proper

Grade: 3/10

Labels: Christian, conquer the world, Death Metal, dvd, mortification, mvd visual

posted by James and Meaghan @ Thursday, May 15, 2008 0 comments

- Various - Metalmania 2007 [DVD and bonus CD]
- Mortification - Conquer The World [DVD]
- Neva Dinova - You May Already Be Dreaming
- Emmure - The Respect Issue
- Article A - Stay Now
- MxPx - The Ultimate Collection
- UNSIGNED SPOTLIGHT - OSHTMO - Killamazoo EP
- The Fall of Troy - Manipulator
- American Speedway - Ship Of Fools
- Greeley Estates - Go West Young Man, Let The Evil ...

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Neva Dinova - You May Already Be Dreaming

Band: Neva Dinova

Album: You May Already Be Dreaming

Genre: Alterna-Folk

Label: Saddle Creek

Tracks:

1. Love From Below
2. Will The Ladies Send You Flowers
3. Clouds
4. Supercomputer
5. Tryptophan
6. Squirrels
7. She's a Ghost
8. Someone's Trippin'
9. What You Want
10. Funeral Home
11. It's Hard to Love You
12. No One Loves Me
13. Apocalypse
14. A Man and His Dream



Hailing from the great state of Nebraska, Neva Dinova came to fruition in its earliest prolific incarnation in 1992. The group is vocally driven, and backed by polyphonic guitar playing and light percussion. Most of the songs move along at a slow walking pace, reminiscent of the 1959 Santo and Johnny hit, "Sleepwalk," but the group also makes an effort to pickup the pace with a much more alternative-folk sound on a few select tracks. From the very first listen though, it's quite evident that the group's main focus is in the lyrical content, which ranges in topic from the bitter turmoil of love to topics more cryptic in nature. According to the CDDB information my iTunes retrieved from the Internet, the group lists themselves as Alternative and Punk, but there is very little about the musical style that suggests punk rock, and the group is certainly not as alternative as let's say, Faith No More, but they would certainly not be pigeon-holed into a classically folk genre either, so I think in this case its up to the listener to decide what sort of sub-genre Neva Dinova is going to be cast into with their 2008 release *You May Already Be Dreaming*.

You May Already Be Dreaming is the newest full-length album from the group, and certainly displays that the group is not experiencing a drought in musical talent. Not just instrumental talent, but tightly arranged vocal harmonies adorn the album like lights on a Christmas tree, and

create an engulfing musical presence in the room around the listener. "Apocalypse," may be the most enchanting of the songs on the album with a haunting vocal melody, punctuated by elemental harmony, followed by an explosion of drums, and distorted lead guitar. If the world were coming to an end, and you didn't have a copy of R.E.M.'s "It's the End of the World and We Know It," Neva Dinova's "Apocalypse" would certainly be a worthy substitute. One of the albums more rocking tracks is "What You Want," a story about a guy that's all wrong for the girl who wants him. Besides being one of the more upbeat tracks musically, it is probably the most passionately delivered vocal performance on the album. Some of the other more captivating tracks on the album include "Someone's Trippin'," the simple-yet-elegant "Clouds," and the dreamy "Tryptophan."

While the album has a pleasing sound, the production is certainly heavy in compression and reverb, an ages-old technique used on pop singles that essentially kills the dynamic range and emotion of the album. In fact many of the songs wreek of inorganic digital processing, something that really distracts from the 'folky' style of the group's playing. Some tracks that you may never listen to include, "Supercomputer," a vain attempt at a rehashing of "Money for Nothing," and "Love From Below," which sounds like a scrapped Johnny Cash demo song about Karen Carpenter.


You May Already Be Dreaming is a decent alterna-folk album, and me be just the album you're looking for, odds are this isn't an album that you can't live without. For fans of modern folk this album is something you may want to give a quick spin, but if it doesn't butter your toast, don't switch to margarine, this album is not going to be the creamiest spread your sink your teeth into.

Written By: Matt Bullock

GRADE: 4/10

WEBSITE

Labels: folk, neva dinova, saddle creek

posted by James and Meaghan @ Thursday, May 15, 2008 0 comments 

Monday, May 12, 2008

Emmure - The Respect Issue

Band: Emmure

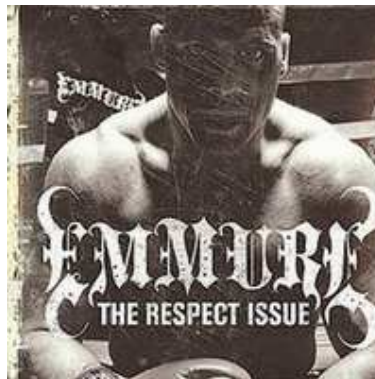
Album: The Respect Issue

Genre: Hardcore/Metal

Label: Victory

Tracks:

1. Young, Rich, And Out Of Control
2. Sound Wave Superior
3. I Only Mean Half of What I Say
4. False Love in Real Life
5. Chicago's Finest
6. Tales From The Burg
7. Rough Justice
8. Snuff 2: The Resurrection
9. Dry Ice
10. You're More Like Friend Without The "R"



When Emmure burst onto the national metal scene with *Goodbye To The Gallows* last year on Victory Records, many critics quickly wrote them off as another knock off, cliché, metal band. As all of you know, Under The Gun didn't exist then, but if we did, we would have disagreed then and even more so now. This week the band releases their bone crushing heavy sophomore effort, *The Respect Issue* and it is sure to not only turn some heads, but set Emmure on the crest of the metal world. It's a fast paced record, clocking in at under 30 min., but I'll be absolutely amazed if it doesn't sit atop many end of the year lists.


The Respect Issue comes packaged with images of TNA Wrestler Kurt Angle in all his menacing glory complete with a mouth guard that says, "violence." If that doesn't set the tone for the album, I don't know what could. The album itself begins with the intro track, "Young, Rich, and Out of Control," which is a simple pulsing open drop D chug fest with the band's latest slogan, "There's no more love, trust, respect, or loyalty, product of my environment," standing as the only lyrics. After the intro, Emmure was no time bringing out the big guns with the guitar lead, "Sound Wave Superior," that serves perfectly to get you into the throwdown mood. It's interesting because this song is near the beginning of the album and if it was used early on in a live show it would serve a similar purpose as it is heavy, but feels like a warm up for what is to come. The lyricism of Frankie Palmeri never ceases to be less than at least as egotistical as a hip hop star. For instance, on, "Sound Wave Superior," we find the line, "if this is becoming a man, then I am God like." It may seem over the top, but you know as well I do that kids will eat this up. "False Love in Real Life," one of the first songs released from the album is easily one of the heaviest tracks the band has ever written. The topic is once again about an ex lover [a topic Palmeri seems to visit a lot throughout all Emmure's releases] and carries tones that may lead some to paint the

band as misogynistic, but I think it's more intended to show the pain and anger of lost love. The very next track, "Chicago's Finest," is all about chasing your dreams in the industry and the pain you feel from doing so. It's very honest and heartfelt, but heavy at the same time. Six tracks in we find my favorite track on the entire album entitled, "Tales from the Burg." This is yet another ex-lover based tale, but musically and lyrically it's the best song Emmure has ever made. The riffs of Ben Lionetti and Jesse Kettive pull you in while the pounding drum tracks from Joe Lionetti mixed with the thick bass work of Mark Davis create a sonic atmosphere of great music that you just need to move to. Unlike their previous effort, this song has less closing group chants, but this track does have a few moments where you can almost see an entire crowd screaming along. To really add a new cog to the machine, Emmure have a 3 minute instrumental track tucked into *The Respect Issue* called, "Dry Ice." The track shows a lighter side of Emmure, but musically it's still very tight and well done. It's the perfect breather before we enter the last track, "You're More Like Friend Without the 'R.'" This closing track finds Emmure using the same gambit they always have, but still managing to make it seem fresh. The lyrics carry the weight of a heart that's grown cold and it builds until it finally closes with the lines, "Time wasted, spent wasted."

The Respect Issue finds Emmure finding their footing on a sound that seems more their own than the series of cliché metal styles used on their previous efforts. It's simply heavy and fast with little room to breathe [minus the instrumental] and what more can you really look for in a hardcore release. This band has all the elements of a band that deserves to be huge in the metal scene, so keep your eyes peeled, because these guys are about to explode.

Written By: James Shotwell
GRADE: 8.5/10
WEBSITE

Labels: emmure, Hardcore, Metal, the respect issue, Victory

posted by James and Meaghan @ Monday, May 12, 2008 0 comments 

Sunday, May 11, 2008

Article A - Stay Now

Band: Article A
Album: Stay Now
Genre: Rock/Powerpop
Label: 785

Tracks:

1. What's The Point
2. My Dedication
3. When You're Gone
4. Don't Change
5. Find a Way
6. Oh Yeah
7. Catch Me
8. My Way Back
9. Stay Now
10. Goodnight Goodbye



To me, power pop equals guilty pleasure. When I got my copy of Article A's debut album, *Stay Now*, I didn't really know what to expect, simply because I have not heard of them. I'll be the first to admit that I was excited when the opening track, "What's The Point," began playing. This band immediately had me hooked. With a power pop feel and great lyrics, this song could very well be the big break for this New Jersey band. The song begins with a distorted guitar and pop-punk vocals. It leads into a catchy, melodic chorus that reminds me a bit of AFI, when they were in their pop-punk phase.

The album continues in a power pop fashion that is guaranteed to make you move around. "Find A Way" offers a groovy drum and bass line that create that agreeable mix that always seems to pulsate in your chest. The vocal and guitar breakdown toward the end adds the finishing touch. Moving into the next track, "Oh Yeah," I begin to hear a more pop-punk feel. With speedy strumming of power chords and loosely sang vocals, this one is sure to win over teenagers everywhere.

My personal favorite is "When You're Gone." It's got a slower, ballad-type of feel to it, but it still can hold my attention. The chorus contains lyrics that are bound to get stuck in your head for days at a time. Add in some vocal harmonies, and we have a hit song. Musically, this tune kind of sounds like something The All American Rejects would have written.

In three simple words, I love it. The only thing I'm not a huge fan of is the strength of the vocal effects on "Don't Change." Other than that, I wouldn't change a thing. The lyrics are great, the melodies are catchy and the rhythm makes me want to jump around. What more could you ask for? This album will definitely be added to my IPOD rotation. Article A has really got something with *Stay Now*. If you're a closet fan of any of the bands I've already mentioned or you just can appreciate a melodic, power pop, piece of art every once in a while, *Stay Now* is completely worth


the \$11. Article A will make it big -- That's all there is to it.

Written By: Meaghan Allen

GRADE: 8.5/10

WEBSITE

Labels: 785 records, article a, Pop Rock, powerpop, Rock, stay now

posted by James and Meaghan @ Sunday, May 11, 2008 0 comments 

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