

DVD REVIEWS

'BLACK METAL SATANICA'

(Deadline) – This black metal documentary has a line on the cover that describes it as 'the most haunting & evil documentary ever made'. Basically this briefly touches on old school BM, & concentrates on the crimes from the Lords Of Chaos book (the early 90's Mayhem insanity, church burnings, grave desecrations, etc.), the stories are quite familiar to anyone that has read the aforementioned book. There are only a few post LOC matters such as the mockery of Christian Black Metal (as if it actually existed). Besides the inclusion of Watain on the soundtrack, it's lacking the accurate music to bring this to life.

The cool bits include rare photos of early Mayhem & some brief footage of Varg Vikernes in court. The interviews are with mostly unknowns that resemble a cast that VH1 might put together for an, 'I Love Black Metal' special. Some profound & spot on quotes from Erik of Watain provide the most authentic dialogue. This merely tells those tales, complete with a quick overview of why Norse bands have these views, having to do with their ancestors, etc. This tale however, deserves to be made into a *real* movie, & it truly would be one of the most horrifying for its realness. My gripe is that there's too many opinions interjected from those who weren't a part of it, but hey, if you want to educate someone on the history of Norwegian BM.

CLUTCH 'FULL FATHOM FIVE; VIDEO FIELD RECORDING'

2007 – 2008' (Weathermaker) – An over-due document of one of the most electric PURE ROCK bands out there. Clutch's performances invariably culminate with the band reaching new heights of improvisational space case blues injected hard rock.

Taped at 5 different stops on the 'Beale St. To Oblivion' tour, this captures both the catchy-clever songwriting ("The Dragonfly", "Burning Beard" & the already classic encore worthy "Electric Worry") & adventurous trips through blues progressions where guitarist Tim Sult provides 70's-inspired pentatonic licks over a solid backbone of drummer Jean-Paul Gaster & bassist Dan Maines. Neil Fallon delivers his soulful & charismatic vocal style.

BOOK REVIEWS

'SLAYER '33 1/3 REIGN IN BLOOD' (Continuum) – A pint (of blood), sized book celebrating the making of the most celebrated Slaytanic half hour ever recorded. From inception, author D.X. Ferris takes you through a who's who of the Slayer circle from the pre-Slayer days, up through the Metal Blade days, up until a fateful night where the band headlined NYC for a crowd that contained numerous label representatives trying to make the move that only Rick Rubin would be able to pull off.

All the key players are introduced & a lot of details pertaining to the albums writing, execution, delivery & aftermath are put forth. With its interesting format, this is a book, which mainly focuses on the golden early era of the band. It delves into its lasting effect on METAL culture at large following this landmark, & clearly paints the picture of what this album was able to achieve: bringing a sense of hardcore-crossover with its rampant speed, & cementing their status of the gods of the big 4. Ferris does a nice job at analyzing the impact of Reign by including quotes from various bands (including members of Municipal Waste, Unearth, Hiram, SYL, At The Gates, etc.), with comparisons to their contemporaries & the final tally of integrity at the end of the day (or the 23 years since). Towards the end each song is dissected, in its creation, meaning & influence.

This book places you in the middle of this bands peak of power, at a time when they were re-writing the musical rulebook with reckless abandon & no cares for the mainstream. HAIL SLAYER!



Photo-Joe D.

'THE 100 GREATEST METAL GUITARISTS' (Joel McIver) (Jawbone Books) – A nicely done large glossy 226 page tome celebrating some of the best METAL guitarists with a brief bio, photos & quotes from each, with more information included for some of the more groundbreaking players (Iommi, Mustaine, etc.). As with any book that has a format of being a 'list', people will bitch, but accuracy can't be accounted for in most instances; personally I have the opinion that Randy Rhodes is more deserving of a spot than, say, Matt Bachand of Shadows Fall, but taken for what it is, it's a nicely done book that gets to the heart of the art of heavy metal guitar playing.

I also wish it focused more on things like their gear & tone, or maybe some interviews with some of them rather than quick quotes & facts, or some tablature examples, (although that could fill another book entirely). As it is, this includes a bio-like overview & a short 'genius moment' for each, (which is basically a song or solo that the author deems an essential moment).

The criteria as explained in the foreword is that that McIver was going for an 'only metal guitarists' direction, so some huge names that crossed over to hard rock are omitted without mercy (no Yngwie, Rhodes, Van Halen, Angus or Ace), leaving room for a host of newer & lesser players, as well as some under-rated giants like Gary Holt, Chris Poland & Marc Rizzo. John Petrucci gets a very high ranking, as does James Hetfield & Tony Iommi.

A few rather killer semi rare photos (for selected entries) illustrate this easy read, but the honest truth is there's not a lot of unknown information herein that true metal fans don't already know about. A fun book, but not quite essential.



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