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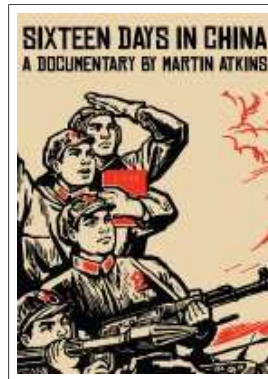
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OH BABY OH BABY. IT'S RIGHT TONIGHT.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 2008

Martin Atkins - "Sixteen Days In China - A Documentary" DVD



When Invisible Records/Pigface honcho Martin Atkins visited China back in 2006, his intention was to 'sign some bands'. His trip ultimately found him in a club which reminded of some great scenes - London late 70's and New York early 80's. Tons of bands, unusual sounds, a diverse 'scene'...no restrictions, pressures, or concessions. Very cool, especially as China's highly restrictive government could easily squash all hope from these musicians (censorship in China is a way of life even more than in supposed 'free societies' like the US).

Along Atkins' way, he encounters trepidation (Westerners are viewed with skepticism to some there, apparently), but he makes some valuable contacts and friends, anyway. His interactions with Chinese rock kids are curious and sometimes a bit standoffish (maybe that's just the language barrier), but he does manage to meet some folks there who are familiar with his Public Image Limited/Killing Joke/Pigface heritage. That's got to be flattering, though you have to wonder how these kids got those records...

As a fascinating intro to the burgeoning Chinese indie scene, this superb documentary chronicles some bands who you will one day hear more from. Atkins is charming, talkative, and quite a fun character to see/hear (somebody give him a talk show already)! And his China Dub Soundsystem mixes smoke. Watch the trailer below to see/hear for yourself.

As in any road trip or extended vacation, there are hitches and problems. We're all entitled to a little bit of crankiness and jetlag. Even when he's tired and things don't go his way, Atkins genuinely wants to expose some of these Chinese bands, and this documentary is a great place to start. It's also a prime glimpse into a world that differs so much from the democratic USA/UK ways of life, but at the same time, it's much the same - artists want to create, and dream. And, of course, they want to rock just as much. Kudos to Atkins for this gem of a film. (Invisible Records/MVD Visual)

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