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REVIEW

Music DVD Review: *Pink Floyd - Meddle: A Classic Album Under Review*

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Meddle: A Classic Album Under Review is a fun hour, delving into the backstory behind the album that preceded *Dark Side of the Moon*, Pink Floyd's *Meddle*. Now, this DVD is pretty much only of interest to people who are familiar with the album, if you like it, and want to learn more, it's worth a look.

The first half of the DVD delves into the early history of "the Floyd," as they're called by nearly all the talking heads on the disc, tracking them from their beginnings in Cambridge, through the early successes of the Syd Barrett era, and the tumultuous period that followed Syd's departure. The narrative the DVD creates is one of a band who were struggling to find an identity following the loss of their leader, and most of the albums between *Piper at the Gates of Dawn* and *Meddle* don't come off so well. We get the impression that they were searching for direction, and eventually found it in the sidelong epic "Echoes."

While the rest of the album is covered, in a nice bit of song by song analysis, these people clearly view "Echoes" as the core of the album, and fittingly so. It's a massive song that travels through all different sections on a cosmic journey. It's an amazing song. The rest of the album isn't as strong. The opening three tracks are good stuff, but "San Tropez" and "Seamus" are easily the worst songs in Floyd's catalogue. It's kind of ridiculous to hear people trying to justify "Seamus" inclusion on the album, when it's so clearly an absurd throwaway track.

The major issue with the DVD is that it's not licensed by Floyd themselves, so most of the talking heads are rock critics and a few people who were around during the era, including a member of Yes, and studio engineer Norman Wright. What this means is that the DVD is the equivalent of listening to a bunch of rock experts talk in depth about the album, with all the positives and negatives that entails. It can feel a bit ridiculous at times to try to describe what makes Floyd work, as one of the critics says here, it's more the texture than the text. You can wax on all you want about the spacey guitar work, but ultimately it's just words, and one person's reaction is just that. The weakest part of the DVD is when the experts try to describe why "Echoes" works, the images it conjures, when I think that's something deeply personal, that can't be fully conveyed by words.

The input we do get from Pink Floyd members comes in the form of quotes in the titles. There's some interesting stuff there, but I'd be curious to see what they have to say about the album today. Of course, considering the rift between them, that's not likely to happen.

One of the best things about the DVD is that they were able to license most of the relevant music, so we don't just hear about the songs, we actually get to hear them. I'm not sure how, but they even managed to license a Beatles song for inclusion on here. It's a bit annoying to have copyright information come up every time a song plays, but it's worthwhile. They also have a lot of interesting archival footage, some from *Live at Pompeii*, but also some stuff I hadn't seen before.

Ultimately, the DVD provides a nice overview of the period that led to the creation of *Meddle*, and I learned a lot about the album I didn't know before, including the fact that it's an ear on the record cover, not some kind of zygote cell. However, if you're already a Floyd expert, I'm not sure there's that much new here. Admittedly, less has been written about the pre *Dark Side* period, so even the experts might get something new, but still, there's no particularly shocking revelations. Also, the 70s era is probably more interesting, with its inter-band tension as they create a series of masterpieces. I'd imagine there's a lot more material to talk about on a DVD about *The Wall* than there is here. But, as a study of an underappreciated album, this is a solid work, and certainly worth at least a rental.

Patrick is a filmmaker/reviewer based out of New York. His films are available on [RespectFilms.com](#), and writings at [Thoughts on Stuff](#).

Comments
