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REVIEW

DVD Review: *Aural Amphetamine - Metallica and the Dawn of Thrash*

Written by [Chris Beaumont](#)

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I am not, never have been, and never will be a metal historian. I would be willing to take that statement a step further and say that I will never be a historian of any sort on any subject. That said, I will always have at least a little knowledge about the subject of music; not much mind you, but enough to get by.

I guess this lack of true historical perspective dates back to my initial interest in music. I started late and therefore missed a lot of metal's roots. The fact that I heard any of the true metal of the '80s is thanks to my childhood friend Matt Byrne (now of the band Hatebreed), who was into the heavy stuff. This is where I first heard bands like Slayer, Metallica, Anthrax, Megadeth, Testament, Exodus, Mercyful Fate, Suicidal Tendencies, and others. Still, I did not become a real fan until years later, after I cut my teeth on hair and glam metal. What does that have to do with *Aural Amphetamine*? Well, it is a documentary about the emergence of thrash and the importance that Metallica played in its growth in popularity.

A documentary about metal would seem like an easy thing to do: get yourself some old concert footage, pick a theme, and you're done. It's never that easy. When it comes right down to it, making a documentary of any sort is rather difficult. Getting the information together is the easy part; what is difficult is putting it together in a fashion that is entertaining. You have to play to your target audience and not bore them. I am sure you have all seen a documentary that was just a bunch of talking heads, not much fun — just take a look at the majority of those unauthorized band documentaries if you want to see how not to do it. Does *Aural Amphetamine* make the material watchable? Sort of.

Aural Amphetamine is not a terribly exciting documentary to watch. *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey* is more entertaining in that regard. This one consists of talking head-style interviews with the occasional band photograph and some concert footage. However, what it lacks in visual excitement, it makes up for with information and quality of interviews. Yes, there are a lot of unfamiliar faces - actually, most of them are unfamiliar - but they are guys who have studied the subject with many, more importantly, having lived it. There are interviews, new and archival, with members of Elixir, Diamond Head, Metallica, Laaz Rockit, as well as other notable personalities, such as a photographer who followed Metallica all through their early years and the author of a Metallica biography.

With the style out of the way - an important part to be certain, but it is not the number one reason to check something like this out - there is the matter of the content. This is where it is important to remember my lack of historical knowledge, as I have to, more or less, accept what I am being fed. In the end, I have to say that the information given here is quite good, offering plenty of historical perspective



"Movie Guy" and is always ready to talk about his favorite form of entertainment and offer up recommendations. Interests include science fiction, horror, and metal music. His writings can be found at [Draven99's Musings](#), as well as [Film School Rejects](#).

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