

music DVDs

## JUDAS PRIEST<sup>9</sup> RISING IN THE EAST RHINO

Comfort steel



Roughly two-thirds of all music DVDs now depict concerts staged in Japan or England. A reasonable

case for global cultural unification? Nah, since it's pretty much been proven that Americans will indiscriminately purchase any DVD regardless of its origin. The truth is a little thornier and owes everything to editing and marketing. Judas Priest tearing it up in an Ozzfest support slot at the county fairgrounds: depressing. Judas Priest playing virtually the same set before a crowd of 50,000+ Japanese fans hanging on Rob Halford's every slurred word: exhilarating. On *Rising in the East*, there's at least the illusion that metal will never die. Besides, Priest peddling their wares in Japan is pretty much a no-brainer, since the band reached its artistic peak in the era captured on seminal 1979 live recording *Unleashed in the East*.

*Rising in the East* sags a bit down the stretch after Halford leads the audience through an extended vocal warm-up in anticipation of a singalong during "You've Got Another Thing Coming." And the less said about the paint-by-numbers inclusions from Priest's 2005 comeback *Angel of Retribution*, the better—though "Breakin' the Law" makes you forget all about "Judas Rising" and "Revolution." Still, the first hour of the DVD is deserving of every last ounce of hyperbolic praise that's been heaped on to the reunited quintet. Pitch-perfect cinematography, an endless parade of classics, a pinch of homoeroticism and all of the visual stimuli you really need in the form of guitarists Glenn Tipton and K.K. Dowling rocking back and forth in tandem. The whole thing rules—but you already knew that just by scanning the set list. —NICK GREEN

## KILLSWITCH ENGAGE<sup>8</sup> SET THIS WORLD ABLAZE ROADRUNNER

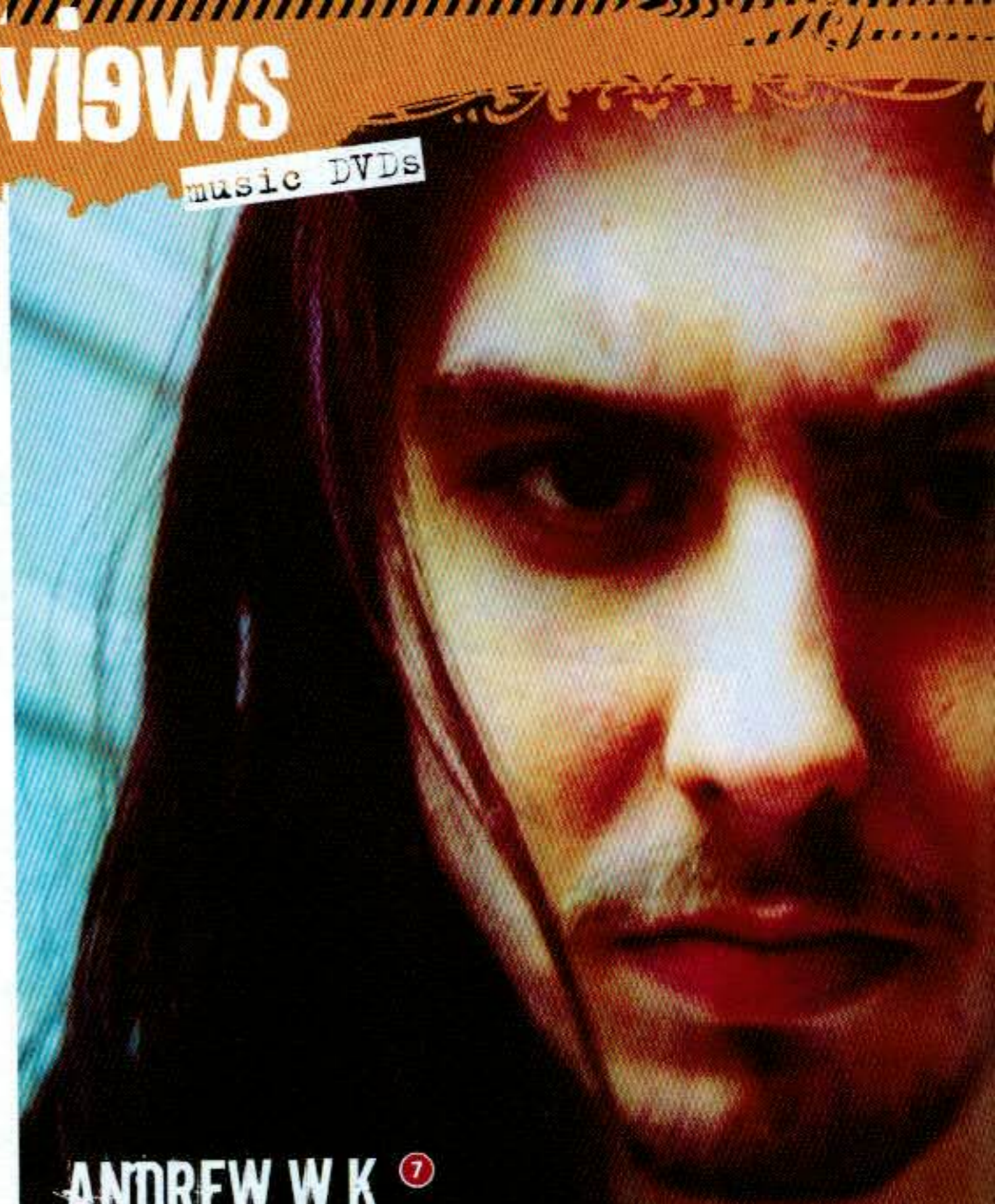
More metal than your mom's kettle, apparently



"That makes it American, metalcore, or whatever you guys call it." It's hard to ignore the wel-

come Swedish sarcasm of In Flames drummer Björn Gelotte as he delivers this line, laughing and smiling slightly at the period. He's both applauding and lamenting the lingering influence of Overcast and its later, Ozzfest-approved offshoot Killswitch Engage, on the New England nexus that would soon include Shadows Fall, such solid out-of-towners as Lamb of God and God Forbid, and a slew of absolute crap successors. As bassist Mike D puts it plainly on this documentary/music video collection/performance DVD, "We were a hardcore band who didn't want to be called metal, but we were playing metal riffs." And the kids love it, of course, especially today, as exemplified in a rock-star caliber show shot pristinely at the Palladium in Worcester, MA, this past summer. And if the hair stylist cape and cutoff jean shorts of guitarist Adam D aren't entrancing enough to hold your attention, there's a constant string of singalong choruses that reaches a Dashboard Confessional level of creepiness (albeit a brutalized one).

Anyone who attended the 70-minute concert will revel in how crisp every frame looks and how ADD-afflicted its editing is, capturing the chicanery from every angle. And the select few who know nothing of Killswitch, but regularly refresh the web pages of bands who will remain nameless, will finally appreciate melodic metalcore done quite right. Anyone else (those of us unimpressed by TV screen circle pits) will likely get bored by the half hour mark and prefer Killswitch's *Alive or Just Breathing* for the sound



## ANDREW W.K.<sup>7</sup>

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A more pertinent question:

Does anyone care?



**That's it.** Now I'm worried. I'm actually thinking of calling the authorities, convinced that there may be rotting bodies in Andrew W.K.'s attic, rather than acid-washed jeans and white t-shirts gone yellow from one too many scissor kicks. Maybe I should have taken his façade-shattering, what-the-fuck-were-you-thinking song "Make Sex" as an indication that the big lug is not all there. Or been alarmed that he honestly believes he's saving (not simply entertaining) people with the Andrew W.K. ethos of partying hard, partying 'til you puke and getting ready to die—playing the part of an endearingly dumb messiah for spring rush dropouts. Unfortunately, these warning signs were overshadowed by Andrew's sheer sense of "let me entertain you, no matter how asinine it makes me look!" naiveté.

Well, I am a fool no more. Not after viewing this mildly disturbing DVD—a defiantly low budget look at Andrew that's a grainy, sub-par concert film one frame [complete

with totally '80s segue effects] and a psychological horror presentation the next [complete with skin-scraping sound effects and shaky camera tricks straight out of *The Grudge*]. The former is likely the product of a media darling on his last dime, but there's really no explaining the latter. The dementia begins with an overblown opening sequence wherein the shadow of Andrew—superimposed on a skyscraper and night sky—speaks of troubled teen years spent stealing from some customer service job. Other priceless, awkward interludes include Andrew staring at the camera and making monk noises, Andrew staring at the camera and fidgeting, and Andrew crawling toward the camera like a zombie about to scoop himself a bowl of brain salad. He also repeats, "don't be a fucking wimp" over and over, until the inspirational phrase is permanently etched into memory. So the live shots are irrelevant, really, cancelled out by the constant question of whether this is the unedited work of a prankster genius or a genuine madman caught in the wild. Decide for yourself; just don't expect to crunch too many beer cans in the process. Scratch your skull, maybe, but party hard? Eh, no. More like pity much. —ANDREW PARKS