

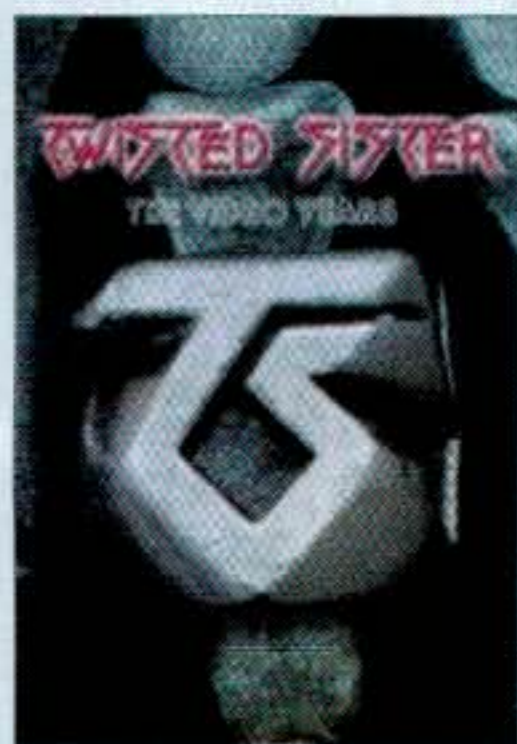
1991 didn't exactly come as a surprise.

But this live DVD shows that Thunders was more musically focused than he'd been in ages right before he died. Filmed in Japan three weeks before his passing, the guitarist is joined by an extremely Stones-y backing band. Strong readings of "Pipeline," "Born To Lose," and the Dolls' "Personality Crisis" make this a fitting send-off for an underground legend. —Greg Prato

TWISTED SISTER

The Video Years

Rhino



Twenty years after their initial run of popularity, the video history of Twisted Sister is now available on DVD. *The Video Years* features seven clips from between 1983 and 1987, plus the 1982 live UK

television appearance that won the band a contract with Atlantic and an hour-long 1984 concert. Aside from nostalgia and the availability of the UK footage, the most enjoyable aspect of the disc is the commentary that precedes each chapter. The members' candor provides interesting perspectives on a career unfairly defined by the videos for "We're Not Gonna Take It" and "I Wanna Rock." Bassist Mark Mendoza maintains that those clips pigeonholed them as silly, and the entire band agrees that "Leader Of The Pack" was a mistake. The 1984 concert fails to fully capture the live energy of Twisted Sister, and the Bobcat Goldthwait interludes from the 1986 *Come Out And Play* videotape are missing.

—Roger Lotring

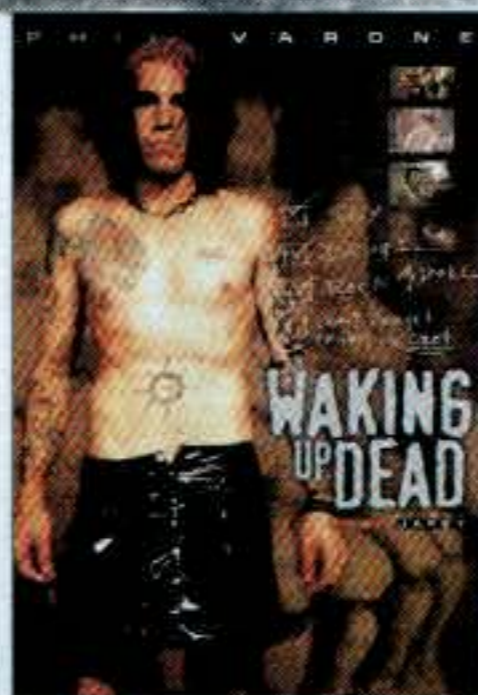
PHIL VARONE

Waking Up Dead

MVD

Who exactly is Phil Varone, and why does he have his own documentary? Don't feel ashamed about asking these questions, as I was wondering the same thing watching *Waking Up Dead*. This 90-minute DVD tells the rollercoaster tale of a former drummer

for both Saigon Kick (during their heyday) and Skid Row (post-Sebastian Bach era). Over a four-year period, we learn that Varone's a family man, but can't say no to his rock 'n' roll



dreams — which results in a divorce, difficulty making ends meet, and a deadly cocaine habit. Varone lets the camera film his paltry bank statement to show that it's not exactly easy making money as a musician. While Varone has some valid points to make about the shady dealings of the music biz, he often comes off like a Spinal Tap-ish goon — not bashful about snorting coke or showing off his latest groupie conquest on camera. —Greg Prato

WINDS

Prominence And Demise

The End

Prominence And Demise, the third full-length release by Norway's Winds,



sounds pretty much what you'd expect a prog metal release to sound like circa the early 21st century. There's lots of 'light and shade' (in other words, chugga-chugga-chug heavy riffing giving way to tranquil breaks), tricky instrumental and time signature bits abound, and of course, the singing alternates between melodic and more pompously metallic styles. But unlike many of the current crop of proggers, Winds has a more noticeably classical side — as evidenced by the ongoing and sometimes dominant presence of pianist Andy Winter throughout the album. The band's instrumental proficiency is never in question — indeed, they seem intent on pummeling the listener into submission with technique, especially on such gymnastic showcases as the album opener, "Universal Creation Array," and also "The Grand Design." Fans of Dream Theater and Kamelot should certainly take note of this album; others, maybe not. —Greg Prato

GAMES

