



enemy. He'll probably never get over being axed by Metallica, who are smarter, infinitely more popular and just all around better. It's this resentment on his part that forever colors his work and has made him into a bitter curmudgeon. Having dealt with a litany of problems the past couple years including injuries, breakdowns and an abysmal reception to his last Megadeth offering *The System Has Failed*, Dave's come out swinging with new album *United Abominations*, his first for the classic Roadrunner label. One of the best metal albums of the year thus far, this disc is a surprising return to form, back to the early days off *Killing is My Business* and *Peace Sells*.

United Abominations is very much a reflection of these turbulent times (its title being an obvious riff on the feeble and ineffective United Nations). But, this time around the political angle works. This is obviously a subject very close to Dave's tortured heart and he has channeled that anger effectively. The music is a sophisticated brew of intricate riffs, breakneck beats and complex timing. It's

hardly thrash, more in the classic power metal mold. Songs like "Sleepwalker," "Washington Is Next!" and the title track are full of piss and vodka, and sound refreshingly vital and inspired. Just maybe, Dave's moved on and is no longer shackled by the past. Good for him.

Overall, I'm glad to see these new releases surfacing 'euz vintage hard rock and metal are as valid as anything else out there, despite what any snobby critics or alt-

music elitists may say...the proof is in the very notion that we're talking about it here in this mag. As for Kingdom Come, they still suck. For comments, questions or something you wanna see, drop me a note

at Retrohead77@yahoo.com. Special thanks this month goes out to Frank "3Gun" from Hatebreed for his support and appreciation for all the vintage shit. Cheers, JK. ☺

band's promo videos—including the absolutely horrendous cover of "Leader of the Pack"—with some insightful intros from each member, and a live show from the 1984 *Stay Hungry* tour. The best thing about this comp is a clip from a TV show where the T.S. was joined onstage by Lemmy and Robbo from Motörhead for a thrashy rendition of the Rolling Stones' "It's Only Rock 'n' Roll." Twisted Sister reformed a few years back and continues to tour and do reasonably well today. Go figure.



second-rate. But for true Starz fans that's a plus. The band sounds great, even without all the studio trickery normally used in piecing live albums together. And over the course of the 16 of songs, the sound does improve.

Reaching back a bit further, one of the greatest bands you've probably never heard was Starz. This band is a textbook example of what I was talking about at the onset. They had the musical chops, a hotshot producer (Jack Douglas—Aerosmith, Cheap Trick), big management (Bill Aucoin, KISS's manager), an explosive live show and a pretty boy front man, Michael Lee Smith. The problem in my mind was the inconsistent material. The band's sound veered too closely to the classic rock template to be embraced by the new punk scene, while too oddball to be mainstream. On top of that, most of the band's albums were rife with filler. But Starz's best album *Violation* still stands as a classic of straight-up '70s arena rock with memorable pop-infused rockers like "Cherry Baby" and "All Night Long." Just released is a live comp entitled *Greatest Hits Live* (GB Music/MVD). Like so many of these comps released by small labels jonesing for new product the technical quality of the material is

I've always had mixed feelings about Megadeth. Out of the original "big four" thrash bands—Metallica, Anthrax, Slayer and Megadeth—Dave Mustaine and his ever-changing cohorts always struck me as the least cohesive. Sure, they had a style and were highly proficient musicians with a cavalcade of colorfully twisted songs. But to me there was always something holding them back. Mustaine always struck me as a bit self-righteous with his overtly political lyrics and endless rambling. But even deeper than that, it's his bitter personality—throughout the band's career, he's continually been his own worst

