

MOVIES

'AIR GUITAR NATION'

Dir: Alexandra Lipsitz
DOCURAMA FILMS

Whilst the title of this film promises a titillating jaunt through a past time widely viewed as pretty dumb-ass, it is in fact a heartwarming and compelling insight into what makes an everyday person vie for the title of World Air Guitar Champion. Of course, it also provides plenty of laughs along the way. The film features the founders of the first ever US Air Guitar Championships, as well as a variety of zany characters participating in the two East and West Coast heats and grand final in Los Angeles, including one contestant who fakes disability only to flip out of his rhinestone studded wheelchair to cut some see-through riffs. The competition soon captures the country's imagination, with the national media keen for a slice of all-American air guitar pie.

The focus is predominantly on David 'C-Diddy' Jung and his desperado nemesis, Dan 'Björn Türoque' Crane, as it follows their journeys, physical and emotional, to Oulu, Finland, the spiritual home of air guitar. It is upon this global stage that seventeen further contestants are introduced, along with a previous world title holder and their equally fascinating stories revealed.

As tension builds both on and off stage, it is difficult to avoid rooting for one particular 'player'. Will it be McInroe the New Zealander, or England's very own Red Plectrum? Whoever you back, as the credits roll you are more than likely to believe the contest's mantra that air guitar promotes world peace – after all, as 'Air Guitar Nation' reminds us, it's impossible to hold both a gun and a transparent 'axe' at the same time.

[7.5] EMMA GRITT

MUSIC DVDS

ONSLAUGHT

'Live Polish Assault 2007'

METAL MIND

Doing a rather good job of maintaining the momentum generated by their excellent 2006 comeback album, 'Killing Peace', here we have a very slick DVD from Onslaught, captured live onstage in Warsaw earlier this year. The back cover declares "100% Live Thrash" and it's no idle boast, featuring most of the band's finest moments and all delivered here with a ruthless efficiency. The likes of 'Let There Be Death', 'Fight With The Beast' and, of course, 'Power From Hell', all sound faster, harder and heavier than ever. Shame there's no 'Lightning War', but hell, you can't have everything. Extras include a fairly dull interview

with Sy Keeler and Nige Rockett, some great footage from Japan last year and even bonus audio material from Bristol Colston Hall recorded way back in 1987. The only real criticism that can be levelled at this is that it occasionally seems a little bit... polite. Perhaps it's the impeccable production values, but neither the band nor audience quite achieve the chaotic intensity both seem primed to unleash.

[6.5] IAN GLASPER

SOLITUDE AETERNUS

'Hour Of Despair'

METAL MIND

The problem with all Metal Mind live DVDs is that whatever the band or their style is, they're always shot and edited the same way. Sure, it's highly professional and a breath of fresh air at a time when a bootleg-quality live set and a cheap photo gallery seem to be the norm. Yet, you just don't film Solitude Aeternus the same way you immortalise brutal death metal bands like, say, Hate or Yattering. This being said, their slick and clean visual trademark is tailor-made for SA, a fantastic band whose perseverance seems to have finally paid off. Not only have the band recently released 'Alone', one of the best true doom albums of recent years, but the recent sharing of singer Robert Lowe with their brothers-in-law Candlemass has emphasised how extremely well-gifted the man is, a fact 'Hour Of Despair' demonstrates in just a matter of minutes. Ten exactly – the exact running time of 'Scent Of Death', the mammoth opening track from both 'Alone' and this twelve-song live set from last February, where Lowe, donning a priest's scarf, urges us poor sinners to repent before it's too late. Goosebumps guaranteed, especially with a band that, despite this product standardisation, rise to the occasion by delivering a metal sound whose precision and skill even defies the term 'classy'.

[8] OLIVIER 'ZOLTAR' BADIN

VARIOUS ARTISTS

'Music With Impact'

REGAIN

Featuring a grand total of 23 clips, 'Music With Impact' showcases the roster of Regain Records in all their glory. With the exception of a couple of computer-generated clips for Bronx Casket Co and Vader's 'Throne Of Rats' alongside the occasional live shoot (Dark Funeral, Sargatanas Reign), the vast majority of clips follow a similar approach, namely a studio performance shoot interspersed with sundry evil or off-the-wall imagery at rapid intervals. For the most part this works well; the fast cutting adds to the power of the overall song and certainly breaks up the monotony of watching

twenty-odd bands windmilling their way through their tracks. There are some standout moments. If you've ever wanted to see Necrophobic crawling in sewers or Mortuus from Marduk rolling about in leaves then this is the place to be. Each of the clips is far from a stinker, but watching the lot in succession does lead to a certain feeling of production-line video-making with most tracks featuring obligatory 'band in shadow' shots and/or filmed in off-colour. Ultimately though, this is the only complaint and only really comes into effect if the desire to sit through over a score of videos on the hoof appeals. Saving the best until last, the Death SS clip is worth the purchase price by itself, getting as close to Mötley Crüe as they ever will.

[7] GUY STRACHAN

MOVIE DVDS

'BLACK METAL: A DOCUMENTARY'

Bill Zebub Productions

If you know anything about black metal then this documentary won't give you any more insight into the genre. Satanism, the roots of BM, should keyboards be used, NSBM – all these subjects and more are explored with the help of members from Venom, Darkthrone, Arkhon Infaustus and more. Venom frontman Cronos is of course somewhat outspoken about everything, Mortii's answers are intelligent as are the Arkhon Infaustus boys and the Immortal lads seem like a good laugh.

There are some terrible sound issues (especially on the live footage) and the editing can be a bit choppy. But if this is for fans, it's a tad annoying that when ever a person answers a question only the name of their band appears. 'Black Metal...' won't be the best documentary on BM but it won't be the worst. In it's favour it has the fact that it's done by fans as opposed to some know-nothing media company, but its insular stance also means it won't go much further than the hardcore enthusiasts or the intrigued outsider.

[6.5] ALEX BONIWELL

COMEDY

PATTON OSWALT

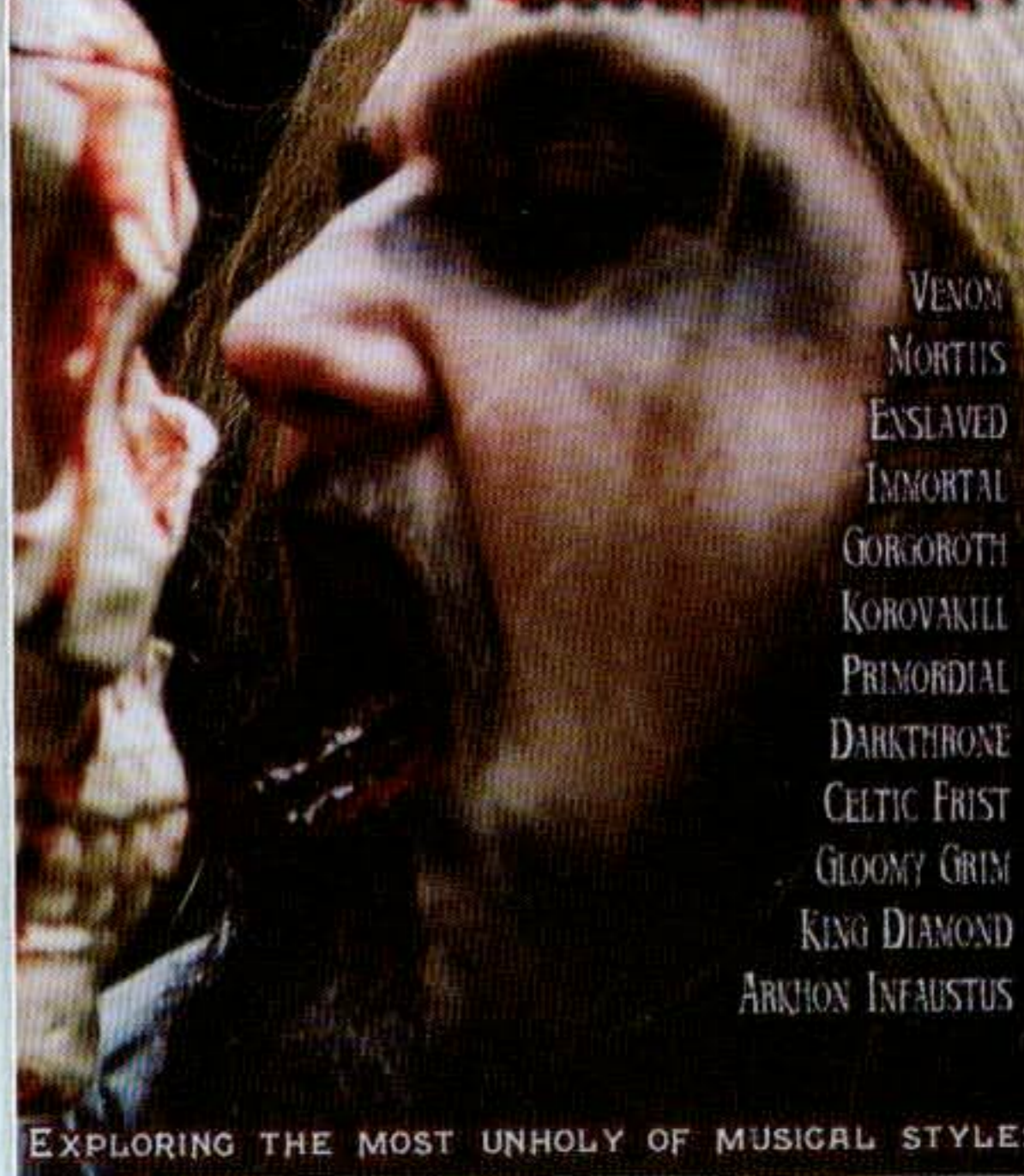
'Werewolves And Lollipops'

SUB POP

It seems Sub Pop are into stand-up comedy now, oddly enough. Odder still, Patton Oswalt spends much of his act telling anecdotes about meeting Brian Dennehey at the 'Batman Begins' premiere, writing jokes for big Hollywood movies, appearing at William Shatner's 'roast', anecdotes that are overlong and not overly funny but effectively ensure that the audience know how successful and famous he is. There is a tendency to labour the point in

BLACK METAL

A DOCUMENTARY



EXPLORING THE MOST UNHOLY OF MUSICAL STYLES

VENOM
MORTIIS
ENSLAVED
IMMORTAL
GORGOROTH
KOROVAKILL
PRIMORDIAL
DARKTHRONE
CELTIC FRIST
GLOOMY CRIM
KING DIAMOND
ARKHON INFAUSTUS

many of his routines, and a lot of his targets lack imagination (Star Wars prequels, KFC, Paris Hilton, George W Bush, kids etc), yet there is something extremely engaging and likeable about Oswalt. His delivery, though clearly influenced by Bill Hicks (even when over-zealously demolishing a heckler), lifts his material, and he has a good ear for an absurd turn of phrase and an apposite comparison (eg: Bush and Cheney as the Dukes Of Hazzard, squeezing out of impossible situations by "jumping the General Lee over the Bill of Rights"). This comes with a bonus DVD of an earlier version of the same set, and is all rather good fun.

[7] CHRIS CHANTLER

THE TICK

'Complete Season 1' DVD

LIBERATION

Clark Kent struggles to find an empty phone box to change in, Batman is a womanising coward, The Punisher is undergoing anger management, Captain America is a chick and the heroes' daring pursuit grinds to a halt as soon as they all run out of rooftops to jump from. Change a few names and we've got the first, surprisingly subversive and ironic season of 'The Tick'. Big, blue and fond of the mixed metaphor, few children's series manage to squeeze in as many knowing, parent-pleasing gags as this, yet thirteen years on and following the an explosion in the adult animation market, it all seems a bit tame. Save the first and the last episode, which are awash with gentle digs at the silliness of superheroics, it seems to focus heavily on surreal Villains Of The Week, the problems

they pose and their overthrow with exactly the level of tedious repetition you expect from kids' TV.

[6.5] JOE DENKER

VIDEO GAMES

'GUITAR HERO ROCKS: THE '80S'

Format: PS2

Publisher: Activision

'Guitar Hero' has been one of the most lauded series' in recent years, and this '80s-celebrating 'sideways' sequel is specifically geared for those who love their lipstick splattered and their leather yanked ball-crushingly tight. As with its predecessors, you simply plug in your plastic plank, and 'fret' the specified buttons in time with a whole host of '80s groin-thrusters, with various difficulty levels dictating the speed and number of notes you have to crank out. Cock rockers will get the most thrill out of the release – Ratt, Skid Row, Twisted Sister, Quiet Riot, Winger, Poison and Faster Pussycat, all rear their hairsprayed heads. But there's still room for a few classics for nostalgic trad metallers (and punks) to flaunt their fantasies to; most notably Anthrax ('Caught In A Mosh'), Dio ('Holy Diver'), Judas Priest ('Electric Eye') and Iron Maiden ('Wrathchild'). Of course, how much you get out of this depends on how indebted you are to '80s mainstream metal, or indeed, how addicted you are to the 'Guitar Hero' experience as a whole. It may have become a novelty to some, but in terms of intoxicated, enjoy-out-loud group gaming, it still pretty much rocks, both proverbially and literally.

[7.5] STEPHEN DALTRY