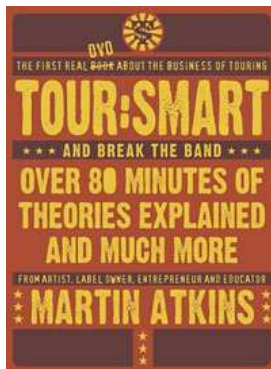


~~Vidiot's box~~

With a resume that includes PIL, Pigface, Ministry and Killing Joke, drummer-and-more Martin Atkins seems qualified enough to have authored the authoritative book *Tour:Smart* and teach the course "The Business of Touring" at Chicago's Columbia College. You kinda get the two, condensed and crammed together, with the DVD *Tour:Smart... And Break the Band* (MVDvisual).

While a creature of the tech-geek hard-rock realm, Atkins shares pearls of doubtlessly hard-earned wisdom that most any amateur—excuse me, "indie"—musician would do well to heed. He spouts in a series of short, rough-hewn talking-head clips, and he's a fairly entertaining orator, chatty if a bit choleric.

A lot of his insights and advisories have that slap-your-forehead quality of seeming so obvious once stated. His patented "Five-Pointed Star Inward Facing Crush" principle, for instance—a base-building strategy involving feeder cities and e-mail lists—is bang on.

Atkins puts his own savvy to the test in the lo-fi doc *Sixteen Days in China*, which sees him flying by the seat of his pants through an underground musical safari in Beijing, struggling to assemble the musicians and material that would fill up his Invisible label's *Look Directly Into the Sun: China Pop 2007* compilation and *China Dub Soundsystem* album, despite a cavalcade of hassles (many of Atkins's own doofy devising).

It's far more self-involved than the similar rock docs *Wasted Orient* and *Beijing Bubbles*, but an informative peep nonetheless into an emerging pop-cultural pole—Atkins's contention that Beijing rock dive D-22 is CBGB's reborn may not be entirely hyperbolic. The slideshow of Mao-vintage, two-tone propaganda posters is a sweet bonus.



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