

King Diamond disappoints with songs of Inquisition

By Michael Deeds
Senior Editor

King Diamond
"The Eye"
Roadracer Records

For some odd reason, King Diamond always has surrounded himself with good musicians. Why such artists are attracted to blatantly Satanic/

SOUNDS

conceptual/pseudo-gothic garble remains a mystery.

The King's first successful band, Mercyful Fate, was probably the best songwise. However, his solo releases have managed to carve competent musical visions, too.

"The Eye," hyped by Roadracer as the King's most biting release yet because of its subject matter, is really nothing new from the master of opera metal.

A dark, laughable trip into the macabre, "The Eye" features good old King screaming in his incessant

falsetto, growling in a real scary baritone and cranking up those echo knobs on the mixing board.

"The Eye" is a concept album, based on stories of the French Inquisition. THIS is why the album is so dangerous, according to Roadracer, because all of the terrible lyrics are based on reality and Christianity — making them irrefutable by PMRC types.

The stars of the songs are introduced on the album sleeve with the phrase, "All of the following characters are real and from that period of time."

The creepy cast includes Nicholas de la Reymie, "Head Investigator of the Christian Burning Court," Madeleine Bavent, an "18-year old French nun who entered the convent at Louviers in 1625, after having been seduced by a priest," and Father Mathurin Picard, "Chaplain of the convent at Louviers from 1628 to his death in 1642. Among his sick insane deeds, he managed to rape Madeleine Bavent."

Now we're all scared. And after King Diamond has established his historical competence with this listing, he proceeds to sing. Here your fear grows — fear that you may bust out laughing. If you haven't heard him yet, the LP may be worth the buy just to hear such idiotic screeches.

Guitarist Andy La Rocque plays the standard Diamond rhythms, then flies over them with standard metal method solos. And Pete Blakk does his guitar stuff respectfully.

The two combine on "Insanity," a pleasant little instrumental that has nothing to do with its title. But musically, "The Eye" is disappointing. Both guitarists are excellent musicians; these tunes just seem a little uninspired. "Eye of the Witch" and "Burn" are usual King killers, while "Two Little Girls," features nice orchestral-style arranging while the Diamond sings in his silly falsetto again.

But overall, as happens in many a concept album, the songs melt together not only lyrically, but musically. The keyboards and heavily-echoed singing get old real quick, though King Diamond's raw vocals certainly wouldn't be a pleasurable alternative. Again, the band may appeal to people into moody, gothic metal. But from a musical standpoint, these vocals combined with such over-dramatic lyrics ruin anything positive here.



Courtesy of Warner Bros.

Clint Eastwood poses in front of a bull elephant in "White Hunter, Black Heart."

White

Continued from Page 9

force to be reckoned with, but his fixation on shooting an elephant is not in his area of strength. He ironically refers to this act as a sin, and in his convoluted logic, it is something he absolutely must do. His aggressive nature mixed with his tremendous drive leads him to believe any situation expendable, including the film project, until he gets his way.

Pete Verill becomes a victim of Wilson's obsessions while trying to finish the revisions of the script prior to the arrival of the actors and the film crew. Wilson talks of simplicity and honesty in writing; he makes references to Ernest Hemingway's life and writing style, and how an artist's life is important to his work. He is subtly demanding of Verill, while focusing his own ambitions on the safari.

Verill confronts Wilson at one point, claiming Wilson to be "either crazy or the most egocentric son-of-a-bitch I know."

The filmmaker is not completely ruthless and heartless, though. He tends to side-step everyone and everything during the course of his own ambitions, yet his strong moral convictions often outweigh his immediate goals. While having dinner with Verill and another woman, Wilson confronts the

woman who makes racist remarks concerning Jews and the Holocaust. Verill is a Jew and he warns her, with a smile, yet she refuses to believe him and continues. Wilson interrupts her and tells her a story of a similar situation with a woman who made similar remarks. He tells her that the other woman was as beautiful as she, yet when she finished her remarks about Jews, he told her that she was "the ugliest goddamn bitch I've ever seen. And you — well, you know the rest." Verill later tells Wilson, concerning the woman: "Sorry, John, I know you wanted to get laid." Wilson replies, "That's all right, Pete, you can't help it if you're a dike."

Later Wilson confronts an English employee of the film company who is beating a black servant for spilling a drink on him. Wilson takes the man outside and attempts to show him what it's like to be in that situation, and ends up being badly beaten himself. Here, Wilson is shown to be undermined by the indestructible nature he believes he has. It is all a part of his obsession and the turn of events that he cannot and will not control as he nears his chance to shoot his elephant.

"White Hunter, Black Heart," directed and produced by Eastwood, was filmed on location in Zimbabwe, Africa and boasts beautiful cinematography as well as impres-

sive performances by Fahey and Eastwood. Unlike Eastwood's tough-guy image as an actor, his character in the film has a flippant and charming air about him. He's a charismatic and volatile person whose interpretation by Eastwood is significant and impressive.

Wilson is based loosely on filmmaker Huston, with writer Viertel placing himself and his experiences directly into the character of Pete Verill. Yet "White Hunter" is not simply about the filming of "The African Queen." It is not about Humphrey Bogart and Katherine Hepburn — the actors and actresses in the film. It's about a film director with a powerful obsession that alienated those who worked with him, and the deadly cost of that obsession.

"White Hunter" is an original screenplay that has remained dormant for 30 years until Eastwood acquired it and moved it quickly into production. As unlikely as it might seem, the same man who is famous for his brutal characters shows a delicate and highly interpretive affection as director of the film and as its lead character. His portrayal of Wilson is impressive and believable. Eastwood proves his ability outside the realm of violent cop movies, and impresses with his directing abilities.

"White Hunter, Black Heart" is showing at the Stuart Theatre, 13th and P streets.

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