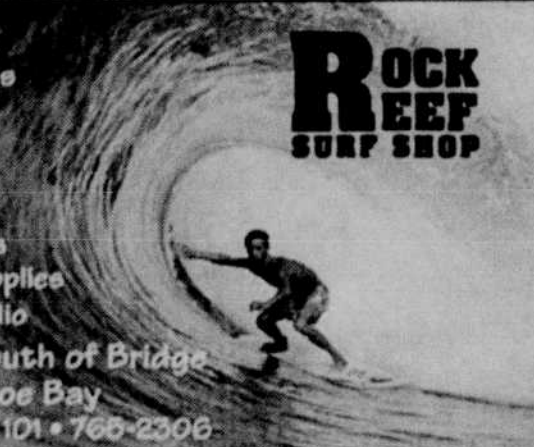


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MUSIC

Scorpions not as good as they were

I remember my first Scorpions concert like it was just yesterday.

Acne and the familiar buzz of a second-hand Kraco 40-Watt power booster filled the air as my five-man posse and I hopped into our 1978 Trans Am. We made the ultimate metal journey to the venue that would house the infamous Scorpions approximately an hour away.



Live Bites
Scorpions

★★

Oh, the travel time was no problem as it proved to be quite valuable, giving us a chance to log a few Old Milwaukeees, swirl the sweet thoughts of teenage angst and ingest the familiar lyrics of Scorpion standards from classic albums like *Love at First Sting* and, of course, *Blackout*. Few words would be spoken as each member of this hard-rockin' assemblage used this time to concentrate on what was to be, at least by 15-year-old standards, the event of a lifetime.

At that time the Scorpions were on top of their game. With the exception of Van Halen, the Scorpions were the hottest metal act going, and they had a live act to match.

The band played to packed houses worldwide and quickly gained the reputation as a precedent-setting heavy metal band.

To capture the unique concert experience that had gained them such great notoriety, the band released *World Wide Live*, which served not only as a live summary of their great successes in the early and mid-1980s, but as a hand-held reminder of the fever-pitch intensity that was so evident when this German band took the stage.

After staking out some prime real estate smack dab in front of where frontman Klaus Meine would soon be standing, we were, in heavy metal terms "ready to rock." And it wasn't long before the rewards would begin to be reaped.

After ripping through some very familiar tunes, it became evident that this indeed would be the event of a lifetime (at least until Judas Priest, AC/DC or the WWF's Hulk Hogan came to town).

Meine delighted as he inter-



COURTESY PHOTO

The Scorpions recent release, *Live Bites*, doesn't live up to past work.

jected his now-characteristic between-song gibberish, the translation of which would elude even the best of interpreters. Guitarist Rudy Schenker nodded along as he buzz-sawed his way through his catalog of ear-drum enemies.

With fists raised high and lighters aflame, the Scorpions strummed and drummed their way through their arsenal of caustic pubescent anthems, ultimately leaving the Clearasil masses drunk with metal and high on hairspray.

So now it's 1995, about a decade later and a few brain cells fewer, and the Scorpions have hit the road once again, documented by their latest release *Live Bites*, a collection of the band's post-*World Wide Live* tunes done live at several different locations world-wide.

Unfortunately, where *World Wide Live* succeeded in chronicling the glory years of the band, the only thing *Live Bites* succeeds in is mapping the down-slide of the Scorpions.

"We wanted at all costs to avoid repeating ourselves," Meine said about the selection of the more recent songs on the new release.

"Of course, many of our songs we recorded for *World Wide Live* are part of our regular repertoire. But we didn't want to just reissue those. Instead we

wanted to put together a compact disc featuring some of the other highlights from our repertoire."

A healthy attitude, but in the end, Meine and the boys just can't pull it off like they used to.

Included on *Live Bites* are some of the band's most familiar post-WWL songs. The opening "Tease Me, Please Me," "When the Smoke is Going Down" and the band's biggest hit "Winds of Change" highlight the 11 live cuts. Also included are three unreleased bonus studio tracks that, quite expectedly, jump out and beg to be put back into the unreleased file.

Despite a few semi-inspired moments, the rest of the disc proves to be fodder for filler with Meine's copacetic vocals and Schenker's sporadic cat-scratch guitar licks, as good as they are (in a Mill Camp sort of way), falling short of carrying this release to the heights realized by its predecessor *World Wide Live*.

Much like life itself, getting old isn't easy, especially for an aging, and balding, group of heavy metal heroes.

And though the Scorpions should be applauded for their unique ability to sustain longevity without embarrassment, that doesn't mean we can't yearn for days gone by.

— CHRIS METZ
Oregon Daily Emerald



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