

Video Killed

Contributed by Todd Robertson

by Dean Carrico / 10-22-2008

The idea of music videos these days is a curiosity, seeing how the two major so-called "music television" stations are more interested in reality programming filled with vacuous idiots and people who mistake looking slutty for being fashionable.

You know, just like the people in the music videos they used to air.

But videos are still a valid extension of music, providing a story sometimes related to the song in question, often times not. And then there's the opportunity to provide a face with a name, giving a little self-gratification to the musicians (people want to be recognized for their work. There's a reason I put my name at the end of my articles).

Without the backing of a major label, the idea of shooting a video and spending an obscene amount of money on film, sets, and securing locations—money that can be better spent on things like drum sticks, guitar strings and booze—seems almost pointless. In the early '80s, when MTV catered toward suburban (RE: white) youths, the network was threatened by CBS Records president Walter Yetnikoff, who said he would pull all his artists and tell the world that MTV refused to play black artists. The network capitulated and we got "Thriller."

Think about that. If not for a threatened boycott, inmates in the Philippines might be doing synchronized dancing to "We Built This City." Perseverance truly pays off.

That kind of tenacity was apparent last week in the Hawai'i International Film Festival (HIFF) '08 Music Video Showcase. Eight local bands including Linus, Nomasterbacks and Detego had videos played next to established acts like The Chemical Brothers, Deathcab for Cutie and still-crazy-after-all-these-years Bjork. There might not be much of a chance it will make it onto the 15 minutes or so that the two major music video stations dedicate to actually playing videos, but it looks like they all had fun doing it.

And the crowd for last Tuesday's event was ready to share in the revelry, shouting for their favorites and whooping it up at familiar sights and locations. Some of the videos were fairly amateurish (Pimpbot shouldn't quit their day jobs—or their night—for Hollywood anytime soon). But a number of videos were surprisingly good, particularly Hell Camino's "Old Snake Road" and Aim for the Heart with their "Long Live the Dead," both of which went for the classic, "need a storyline? Just add zombies!" theme. It makes sense, since most zombie films are typically short on plot but long on visuals—like most music videos.

Loft hosted the free event, and the sound was fairly muddled in the cavernous space. It's hard to enjoy a song when you feel like your mother, complaining how you can't understand what the singer is saying. The crowd enjoyed it all the same, however, filling up the rows of folding chairs and watching attentively (the smart ones showed up early and took the plush seating on the sides, and the absolutely brilliant ones showed up even earlier to stake out the bar, where Kona and Sake2Me were being handed out for free). When the videos ended, Pimpbot and Make the Change showed the crowd exactly why live is always better than tape. Hell, they didn't even have to dress as zombies.

[Click here to watch the Hell Caminos video, produced by Ghetto Pirate and Hyperspective.](#)