

CD Review

DragonForce is a musical Godzilla

by Aaron Palmer
Managing Editor

I was completely unaware of this band until just recently, when they thoroughly rocked my world. DragonForce can just about be summed up by their name. Their sound could pass for the soundtrack to a Final Fantasy game played in 80's genre speed metal. Most of their material seems to be about other worldly medieval, epic battles, like putting a sound to Michael Whelman's art. At first glance the band comes across in a rather humorous manner.

Opening the album with a speedy, finger picked intro accompanied by a synth drum and keyboard, it's just about what you'd expect from the name. Within seconds, the band tears off on a musical rampage that does not cease



until the final song, which doesn't seem to fit in with the rest of the material.

The drums run faster than you can tap your fingers for about an hour straight, which sounds more tiring than impressive. The bassist holds up his end occasionally throwing out some impressive riffs, but mostly keeping pace. The guitars are what truly make the

band. There are two guitarists that take turns between machine-like aggression of rhythm and shredding fire down the neck of their instruments. Often they come together and somehow never miss a note through their borage of tapping and scaling.

These guys have rejuvenated speed metal from two decades past only to give it a new, tighter edge. Not since Slayer's "Reign In Blood" has there been such an attack on the ear. Not only that, but DragonForce makes it sound easy. Even if opposed to the idea of this music, you cannot dub yourself a guitarist without a listen.

DVD Review

Babel: hyped disappointment

by Zack Harding
Arts & Life Editor

Directed by Alejandro
Gonzalez Iñárritu
Starring Brad Pitt, Cate
Blanchett
Paramount Vantage, 2006



So there I am, strolling through the recent DVD releases and my eye lands on the much touted *Babel*. It must be the best choice, right? Nope.

It is not that *Babel* is a particularly bad movie, but it is definitely boring, it fails to realize the potential that it has, and it ultimately doesn't come to a very meaningful end.

The premise revolves around four groups of people, spanning three different countries, who are all linked to a shooting that takes

place in Morocco. The movie switches between the four different settings throughout and attempts to tie them together, though only loosely.

It takes a good hour before anything really interesting starts to happen, which is one of the downfalls of the movie. Everything up to the shooting is very banal and serves to take away from any message that tries to come across.

There is an overall theme of the difficulty of communication between different cultures, but it really never manifests itself within the film. The clearest example is with the deaf/mute character Chieko, a sex-crazed Japanese girl who is outcast due to her disability. There are certain scenes where we see the contrast of the vibrant world around her and her inner sensation of absolute silence. These scenes are some of the best in the film.

The acting is good, though the way the film is set up, there are no real "starring" actors. Brad Pitt does well as the frantic, worried husband, and though Cate Blanchett's acting is well done, it is somewhat wasted in the lacking role that she plays. The two young boys who play Moroccan brothers are excellent in their roles.

Babel was co-produced between three different countries, and this disjointedness shows. Ultimately it is a film that falls far short of what it intends. It takes a long time to pick up, and once it does, it never really unites the four stories of the different cultures in any meaningful way. In fact, the Japanese storyline is almost completely unimportant to the rest of the movie, and could have easily been dropped. I didn't detest this film, I was just remarkably unimpressed. It gets 2.5 out of 5 stars.

HOROSCOPE

Aries: Today is the day to revamp your look. People are staring and its time to look just a little better in the public. Lucky Color: Neon Carrot

Taurus: Not sure what to do eh? Well, hopefully you'll cool your jets long enough to realize everything is not perfect, but okay. Lucky Color: Purple Razzmatazz

Gemini: You're not sweating anything at all right now. All you have to do right now is pay off your family debt and you won't be hung at dawn. Lucky Color: Scabies White

Cancer: Crab take over alert! Venus has moved out of your system causing you to be a little more "extroverted". Lucky Color: Sepia

Leo: Pampering yourself is always a good way to relax...when you have the money. Watch out or you'll be sorry. Lucky Color: Radish Bloom

Virgo: You're so bashful! Stop being a knot-on-a-log and enjoy your fruit a little here and there. Lucky Color: Alpine

Libra: You're never completely balanced and your romantic life is in extreme jeopardy because of it. Fickle thy name is Libra. Lucky Color: Denim

Scorpio: Keep your lips sealed because there are things larger than scorpions. Sometimes its nice to just lay low for a while. Lucky Color: Blue Bell.

Sagittarius: You're not far from Libra this week, then again you were always somewhat of forgetful, conceited, amphibian. Lucky Color: New Shrimp.

Capricorn: The oracle is not really interested in you this week. You should just lie down where you are. Lucky Color: Fern.

Aquarius: Asking for help is not a big deal. Asking others for opinions may be too much. Be careful of who you ask and even more so of who is watching while you do it. Lucky Color: Evening Hush.

Pisces: People wonder where you are and what you do. You're an enigma to those who think you're special—open up and come out. Lucky Color: Asparagus.