

Modern rock lovers can still find appeal in classic Pantera

By **BRIAN ESTES**
Commentary

Although it may seem outdated, old school, or even obscene by today's standards, there was a time back in the 80's and early 90's when bands still knew how to rock.

For those who are looking for an album that delivers an aural assault with egregious amounts of speed and creativity added to the mix, look no further than Pantera's 1992 release, "Vulgar Display of Power."

Phillip Anselmo's vocal delivery and Dimebag Darrell's vitriolic guitar play are the two defining characteristics of the album.

Darrell unleashes an inhumane coal black metallic barrage into every riff he churns out. For his part, Anselmo injects attitude of immense proportions into the record. The rhythm section, led by bassist Rex Brown, epitomizes the sludgy hardcore nature of the album.

Two of Pantera's best-known songs, "Mouth for War" and "Walk," are found early in the tracklisting. Both tracks are straight-ahead heavy metal anthems that boast Darrell's inventive, laid back solos.

Perhaps one of the most brutal offerings on the album is found in the second track, "A New Level." The song

contains arguably one of the loudest, most intense riffs in recent memory, with Anselmo delivering vocals that are stretched to such an extreme that one might swear his vocal cords were about to snap.

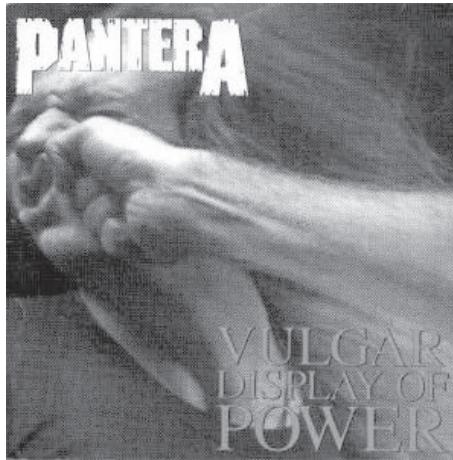
Shortly thereafter lie the two fastest songs on the record, "Rise" and "Fucking Hostile."

Both songs exhibit prime examples of fast paced aggression at its finest. The latter track contains a solo which at first glance seems like it could have been pulled off of any early Metallica record, but Darrell displays his musical ingenuity by adding his own unique twist to it at the end.

However, the band also proves they can hit listeners with something a bit different.

"This Love" opens with an ominous acoustic guitar melody and features Anselmo delivering well-harmonized vocals, a rarity for anything Pantera. But as expected, it's not long before the tune begins to raise its hardcore head.

As stated previously, Anselmo provides an attitude that colors and



down to a science."

Darrell showcases his creative mastery with some genuinely unique riffs found in "Live in a Hole" and "By Demons be Driven," although neither track is a highlight and the former probably constitutes the album's weakest moment. The closer, "Hollow" begins as an emotional ballad but ultimately ends the album in a chaotic rage.

This album will probably have the greatest appeal to any fan of modern day rock or underground metal.

Fans of Metallica, Megadeth, Linkin Park, Godsmack, or Lamb of God will most definitely find something to appreciate here.

With that said, it would be in error to say that this is an album that anyone can listen to. There's a good chance that fans of Dave Matthews and Mary J. Blige will be repulsed by this.

By the same token, though, don't make the mistake of thinking that this is something which needs to be quarantined and approached only by the underground goth high school kids.

Pantera made an inspired effort and those who are fans of fast, driving, aggressive music will be hard pressed to find a finer example than "Vulgar Display of Power."

shapes the band's work.

On "Regular People (Conceit)" he bellows, "You practice in your mirror/ to be just like me/ but you just can't see/ you ain't got the balls son."

However, he proves that he can write lyrics that are directed more towards social ills.

On "No Good (Attack the Radical)," he sings, "In the states, there's a problem with race because of ignorant past burned fires/ From evolution we've been killing each other/ I figure man should have it

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