

Comedy DVD Review:

Kamakazi, video album by Steven Pearl

Reviewed by Jennifer McAuliffe

Steven Pearls' video album is an energetic ride, with topics spanning the American good ol' days of the nineteen fifties to present day politics. No topic is left unscathed in this high-speed chase turned comedy special.

Mr. Pearl delights the audience, who are visible, with singsong jokes. Ethnic barbs, celebrity skewering and manic act outs. Performed in front of a diverse crowd, Steven Pearl jumps in and shakes hands, serenades and accuses the crowd while always turning the punchline on himself. He is rewarded with peals of laughter for every edge he walks and every fine line he tramples.

This album is in stark contrast to the modern style of comedian, plaid bedecked, bearded, under-performing and sarcastic. Mr. Pearl has been in the industry for 40 years and it shows. He has a voice and style that calls out from a time when comedians destroyed the stage, pulled at the curtains, stole food from the patron's tables. This is live. He doesn't tell stories, he doesn't treat the audience as if they are privileged to be watching him. The man sings for his dinner.

Mr. Pearl gives one the impression he will have a heart attack right on stage. He leaves nothing behind for the audience to wonder what he thought. The laughs per minute is exceptional. This is a classic album, written and performed by a man who has seen the trends in comedy come and go. It's timeless: nothing too trendy but the topics are timely, the style is a throwback to the energy that has been lost since the old days of Catskills comedy era. Pearl's style is frenetic and precise, with the joy of someone who knows he's just kidding around.

The parts I found the most memorable were Pearl's take on Canada, which is especially interesting for his fan base up in the great white north. Also, the roasting of Paula Deen, who gets what she dishes out in this belly busting track. Finally, all Black-Jewish relations were lighthearted and done with the classic comedy of a seasoned professional who has been attacking the stage in diverse rooms for almost half a century.

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