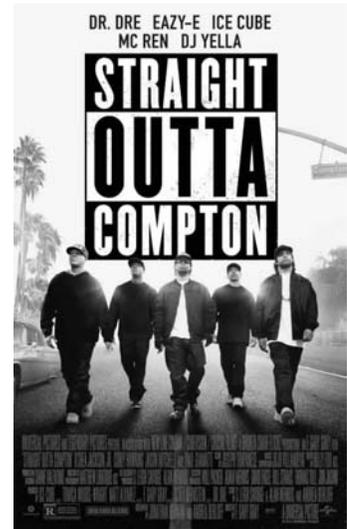


August 5, 2016

*Spotlight on DVD*

*Straight Outta Compton*

*DVD STR*



Growing up on the east side of Saskatoon in the eighties, I was never really exposed to gangsta rap. Yes, I'd heard Fresh Prince and Young M.C and the other artists that got radio play, but that was it. It was later, in 1999 that I would have a chance to hear Dr. Dre's "2001" and I was blown away. The music was phenomenal and the lyrics were unlike anything I had ever heard. So when I heard a biopic for N.W.A. was coming out I got very excited, hoping for a chance to learn more about these very talented men and where they had come from.

I wasn't disappointed, the film is excellent. It starts off in Compton, showing us what life was like for them as young Afro-American men in a city that was becoming notorious for a police department plagued by racism. They were living in a place where violence could erupt at any moment and the authorities could not be relied on. N.W.A. would write about their lives and their community in their songs, many of the stories coming from direct experience.

The writing and the acting are very good. There is an authenticity to their performances which make this film an absolute pleasure to watch. The settings and attention to historical details and events really make the picture come alive and help remind the viewer of what was going on at the time. Remember Rodney King and the riots that followed? The East Coast/West Coast rivalry that had rappers killing rappers? At one point N.W.A. was even told by the F.B.I. that they couldn't perform one of their songs live anymore, because of its negative attitude towards law enforcement. They performed the song anyway.

The film not only showcases their incredible careers, both in N.W.A. and their solo releases, but also presents a look at their legacy. They have helped out too many artists to list here; Dr. Dre himself has produced an astonishing number of successful artists and gold and platinum selling records.

Although not for everyone, some may find the language and some of the content offensive, Straight Outta Compton is a great way to learn about a very interesting bit of musical history.

Drop by the library to check out the DVD and the CD from the movie.

*Review prepared by Keenan Gauthier*