

The Hellcopters, GOODNIGHT CLEVELAND (Music Video Distributors). Sweden's Hellcopters are nothing if not children of the '70s — after escaping the death-boogie metal outfit Entombed, drummer-turned-frontman Nicke Andersson threw his record collection (Kiss, Stooges, MC5, Sonic's *Rendezvous*, Radio Birdman, Motown) into a trash bin and set it on fire. Or at least that's what their first few records sounded like, until original guitarist Dregen split and the band began alternating fast, loud, and lean hard-rock albums with more prosaic, noodlier affairs. This documentary, which was filmed for Swedish television and "shot using the same direct-cinema techniques developed by the master filmmakers of the early '70s," catches the group during an upsurge, on the last leg of an American tour behind 2002's raucous *High Visibility* (Gearhead). They weren't enjoying any, having squandered their shot at US stardom with the lackluster *Grande Rock* (on Sub Pop several years earlier), but the live performances here confirm their godhead — from psychedelic feedback orgies in New York to a frantic duet with Sonic's Scott Morgan in Detroit to a wailing three-guitar onslaught with a guest spot from Gaza Stripper Rick Sims at a show at Boston's Axis. The film is also pretty good at explaining why the 'Copters never caught on: thanks in part to federal subsidies at home, Swedish rockers are lazy, petulant bastards who seem allergic to even the slightest hint of work. (Bonus points for the English subtitles, which catch ace guitarist Robert "Strings" Eriksson whining in Swedish about a photo shoot with *Revolver*.) The extras include some extremely rough bootleg footage of the band's early days — a reminder that any outfit's second gig ever is probably not a keeper — as well as an obstructed-view document of the Hives' Howlin' Pelle joining in for an electrifying take on the Stooges' "Search and Destroy."



GOODNIGHT CLEVELAND: watch this one and you may understand why Sweden's Hellcopters never caught on.