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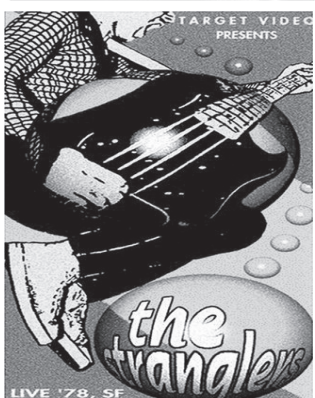
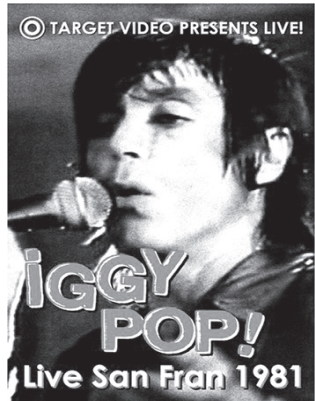
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Sleater-Kinney
The Woods
(Sub Pop)

Sleater-Kinney fans are a pretty loyal lot. Over ten years of recording, the Portland, Oregon trio has forged a unique trust with their fans by releasing consistently impressive albums. S-K has developed a signature sound unlike any other band making music, while introducing subtle sonic variations on each new record to ensure that they never get mired in their own formula. With 1997's *Dig Me Out* (Kill Rock Stars) guitarists and vocalists Corin Tucker and Carrie Brownstein and their new drummer Janet Weiss proved that they were one of the most important and potentially influential punk bands to come along in many years. On *The Hot Rock* (Kill Rock Stars, 1999), Roger Moutenot's atmospheric production highlighted the range and versatility of Sleater-Kinney's songwriting, and illustrated that they were not just one of the most important punk bands of their era, but also one of the most important rock bands making music. S-K's seventh full-length, *The Woods* (Sub Pop), reflects a different stylistic shift, and one that could shock a lot of fans. Are you ready for Sleater-Kinney's take on arena rock? The undeniable influence of '70s rock juggernauts that shook stadiums on a regular basis is all over *The Woods*. It's raw and in your face, but the song structures and spirit of the disc are unmistakably classic rock. Robert Plant and Jimmy Page should probably get a writing credit—or at least a thank you—for “What's Mine Is Yours” and “Let's Call It Love,” and while Weiss' solid, powerful bashing makes her a believable 21st century stand-in for John Bonham, it's questionable if there's much point to the skronky Page-meets-Thurston Moore guitar breakdown in “What's Mine Is Yours.” Elsewhere the noisy guitar theatrics are more effective, especially when they're integrated seamlessly into songs like “Steep Air” and “Let's Call It Love.” “Modern Girl” authentically recreates the sound of '70s guitar rockers exploring their Delta blues roots, and “Jumpers” has an early space rock feel. “Entertain” and “Rollercoaster” are about as close to the traditional Sleater-Kinney sound as you'll find on *The Woods*, but Dave Fridmann's production preserves the classic rock continuity of the album even on these tracks. Like their recent stint opening shows for Pearl Jam, Sleater-Kinney's move to Sub Pop could introduce them to a wider audience, but it's hard to believe that any old dogs will trade their Led Zeppelin records for the new trick of three punk girls appropriating arena rock. The genuine intensity in the record's performances combined with the way the album was consciously mixed and mastered to be bombastically loud and noisy rules out the legitimacy of any claim that Sleater-Kinney is selling out. And while their drive to continually challenge themselves and their audience is highly admirable, beware that on *The Woods* they do so at the expense of the quick, unforgettable pop songs they turned out in the past. As devoted as Sleater-Kinney fans are, this will be the most challenging of the band's albums for them to get their heads around.

—matt barber



Iggy Pop
Live San Fran 1981 DVD
The Stranglers
Live '78, in San Francisco DVD
(Music Video Distributors)

Any connoisseur of early punk is sure to be well familiar with certain moments of the genre on film. A shirtless Iggy Pop walking on top of a crowd while smearing peanut butter all over himself and his fans. The MC5 playing like a sideshow act from a three-ring circus in hell (arms and legs akimbo in unison, guitars and drums thrown in the air for a victorious finale). The New York Dolls on that German TV show, “Musikladen,” resembling something that Keith Richards might have dreamt up on a particularly hell-bent weekend. Sadly, none of this footage is widely available. Until it is, fans are left to scour the vaults for similarly thrilling images. Well, I ain't gonna lie ta yas, deese ain't doze. However, both of these DVDs do represent a period of time from much-cherished artists that has been rarely seen up until now. By the time Iggy Pop played in San Francisco in 1981, he was already universally hailed as the “Godfather of Punk.” Sadly, that didn't translate to a whole heck of a lot of sales for the Iggster, and by the time this video was shot, Pop was playing modest sized clubs and recording modestly “good” material. Despite Iggy coming out strong in the beginning of this hour-long concert (clad in a mini-skirt and garter belt, no less), it's clear that the over-packed San Francisco crowd wants to hear the old stuff. While Iggy and his band (which features a nitro fueled Clem Burke on drums and three guitarists including Carlos Alomar of David Bowie fan) do deliver old standards like “T.V. Eye,” “1969” and “Lust for Life,” the break-neck pace of performance suggests that they might have been thinking about what was lined up for them backstage rather than what was going on in front of them. *Live in San Fran 1981* is well shot with multi-camera angles to provide decent views of Pop's patented chicken dances and wig flip moves. Even the sound is pretty decent, although Iggy's vocals are far too low in the mix for my taste, and prove that even when grappling with the onset of “the 80s sound,” Iggy still understood the power of sonic overdrive (But did he really need three guitarists to do it? There was only one Ron Ashton on *Funhouse!*). Recorded in the same city three years earlier, *The Stranglers DVD* looks like grainy FBI surveillance footage compared to the slick look of the Iggy film. Filmed in black and white by a single camera, this half hour disc presents “seven” songs from one of Britain's most overlooked and inventive punk rock bands (I put the word seven in quotes because while the song “Get a Grip on Yourself” is listed on the back, one can only hear a live version of the song while the credits role across a black background). Clearly, the purpose here is archival. It's hard to suggest that anyone could easily enjoy the DVD on its own merits, as the sound and visuals are so abysmal, but it does provide a certain thrill to see a band whose legend is normally based on its studio recordings at such an early point in its career. Hardcore fans of either artist will undoubtedly plunk down the cash to see their faves in action, but perhaps some energetic soul should organize a “Crappy Punk Movie Screening” night so that we can all watch this crap together. Who knows? Maybe somebody will even dig up that New York Dolls footage to give the evening some worth.

—mark norris

Group Name:

Lotus Bay

When/Where playing this week?

Fri. May 27 at Merlin's

Sat. May 28 at Central Park Grill

Sun. May 29 at Mickey Rats on the Lake

Mon. May 30 at the Elmwood Lounge



Band Members Names/

instrument...

Bryan Mecozzi - guitar/vocals

Adrian Brady-Cesana - drums/vocals

Samuel Graci - bass

When did the band form?

Winter of 2004

You might like our music if you like...

CCR, Sly and the Family Stone, Cream

List of Recorded Releases:

The Lotus Bay EP

Upcoming Events:

Lotus Bay is currently recording their full-length album and booking shows throughout Buffalo and Myrtle Beach.

Anything else you would like our readers to know about the band?

Lotus Bay is a rock n' roll revival heavily drenched by the delta blues.

Contact information:

www.lotusbaymusic.com