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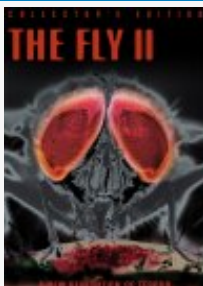
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Devo: Live - 1980

[Music Video Distributors](#) // Unrated // \$14.95 // August 30, 2005Review by [Adam Tyner](#) | posted September 5, 2005 | [E-mail the Author](#) | [Start a Discussion](#)

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This is the third live Devo DVD to be released in the past year and a half, but "[Devo Live](#)" was taped in 1996, and "[Live in the Land of the Rising Sun](#)" was culled from a 2003 show. Both play more like "greatest hits, live!" concerts with nearly identical setlists, with "...Rising Sun" topping out at 13 songs and "Devo Live" coming in a couple less than that. This most recent Devo disc, "Live - 1980", captures the band at their prime. Recorded in Petaluma, CA on August 17th, 1980 (a day after the [Dev-O Live](#) EP/promotional album was taped), this concert documents Devo in support of their third full-length, "Freedom of Choice". The setlist is not only considerably longer than the other two Devo DVDs, but it reaches deeper into the band's catalog of songs than just their best known singles. Six of the songs are from "Q: Are We Not Men? A: We Are Devo!" (more than half the album), five are from "Duty Now for the Future", seven are from "Freedom of Choice" (again, just over half the album), and the rarity "Be Stiff" is tossed in for good measure. The full track listing is:



1. Whip It
2. Snowball
3. It's Not Right
4. Girl U Want
5. Planet Earth
6. S.I.B. (Swelling Itching Brain)
7. Secret Agent Man
8. Pink Pussycat
9. Blockhead
10. (I Can't Get No) Satisfaction
11. Uncontrollable Urge
12. Mongoloid

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13. Be Stiff
14. Gates of Steel
15. Freedom of Choice
16. Jocko Homo
17. Smart Patrol / Mr. DNA
18. Gut Feeling / Slap Your Mammy
19. Come Back Jonee

A couple of the films used in the concert -- "Tunnel of Life" and "Devo Corporate Anthem" -- are also tacked onto the end of the DVD.

This is Devo at its best. Even though the band has a massive array of synthesizers on stage, its songs are still primarily driven by the holy trinity of guitar, bass, and drums, and this is a fast, loud,



infectiously poppy, rock-as-a-verb performance. There's not a weak song of the nineteen packed into the set, and the DVD focuses entirely on the music. Whatever stage banter there may have been is almost entirely gutted, and it doesn't have interviews and candid footage killing the flow between songs like the "Live in the Land of the Rising Sun" disc. It's just one great song after another. Taken purely in terms of the quality of its audio and video, this DVD doesn't stack up that well next to the other two live discs, but I prefer this performance, and I definitely prefer this selection of songs.

Video: Full-frame; shot on video. It's a professionally shot performance, but the DVD suffers from the state of this grade of

video tech in 1980. It's noisy. Black levels are poor. The further back the cameras are, the softer the picture gets...to the point that the widest shots of the stage are almost completely indistinct, and if not for their instruments, I wouldn't be able to tell who was who. Those are limitations with the source material, though, not the DVD itself. Still watchable.

Audio: There are two sets of audio mixes on this DVD -- Bob Casale and the guys at Big Round Sound have each assembled stereo and Dolby Digital 5.1 soundtracks of the concert, with a total of four tracks in total. Casale's mix is selected by default, and that's what I primarily listened to when reviewing this disc. Doing a quick A/B comparison with a few songs, Big Round's mix offers quite a bit more bass, but it has a tinny, metallic sound...probably the result of digitally overscrubbing the original audio. Casale's doesn't have that same low-end thunder, and it doesn't sound quite as clean overall, but that's probably better representative of the way this concert was originally recorded. I'd pick Casale's mix over Big Round Sound's, but it's obviously welcome to have so many different choices on-hand.

To compare the audio on this disc to a couple of the other live Devo DVDs on store shelves, the fidelity of "Live - 1980" not surprisingly isn't quite as slick as the much more recently recorded "Devo Live" or "Live in the Land of the Rising Sun". Both mixes do a good job of spreading the audio around a multichannel setup -- much more convincing than "Live in the Land of the Rising Sun", where it sounded like the same audio pumping out of five speakers -- although the instruments aren't discretely



rooted in individual speakers the way "Devo Live" was. You don't get the same sense of clarity as the other two DVDs, and the vocals sound kind of clipped. I love the performance, though, and the audio is definitely good enough.

Supplements: The DVD side of the disc has a couple of extras, most notably a pair of performances from Dove (the band of love!) from the M-80 Concert in Minneapolis in 1979. There are two songs, photographed in black and white -- "Praying Hands" and "Shrivel Up". Very neat, and apparently a DVD with more performances from the concert is in the making. There's also a plug for Devo's "Live in the Land of the Rising Sun" DVD.



Spuds scratching their heads and wondering why there are so many stars under the "Extras" heading in the sidebar: this is a DualDisc release, so you can watch the concert on your DVD player, then flip the disc over and pop it in your stereo. I couldn't get the CD side to play on my DVD player or on my computer's DVD-ROM, but it seems alright in a standard CD player. The CD sounds closer to Bob Casale's stereo mix, if you're wondering.




Conclusion: More casual Devo fans should stick with "Live in the Land of the Rising Sun", a DVD that includes most of the band's best known songs. "Live - 1980" might not look or sound quite as nice as the more recently taped DVDs, but it captures a spectacular performance that digs deep into the band's catalog of songs. Indispensable for fans, and the DualDisc option with CD audio on the flipside of the disc is a huge bonus. **Highly Recommended.**

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