



## DEVO Live 1980 (Dual Disc/Concert) □

Picture: B-    Sound: B    Extras: B    Film: B

Formed in 1972 in Akron, Ohio, DEVO embodied, in parody form, the rising consumer culture that would reach its apotheosis in the 1980's. Theoretically, they believed that Man had reached it's height, and de-volution had begun. Like many of their Punk counterparts, DEVO had a political message that was lost on all but their fans.

In the meantime they produced a lot of fun music, riding the crest of the New Wave on a crackle of synthesized, hook-laden pop songs. Filmed in Petaluma, California during the **Freedom of Choice** tour, **DEVO Live 1980** captures the band at the height of their career.

DEVO was one of the first triumphs of the Geek culture that has since come to pervade the media. Five skinny, dorky boys command the stage as rock stars. The concert begins in their signature white corporate uniforms and energy domes (the now famous flowerpot hats). Their movements, while jerky and spastic, are coordinated, complementing the staccato rhythms and delivery of the vocals. As the concert progresses they loosen up. The energy and stage presence is undeniable.

The DVD begins with a scrolling written introduction, bringing their political manifesto into the present, citing examples of the current administration as evidence that de-volution continues. The concert songs are:

*Whip It*  
*Snowball*  
*Its Not Right*  
*Girl U Want*  
*Planet Earth*  
*S.I.B. (Swelling Itching Brain)*  
*Secret Agent Man*  
*Pink Pussycat*  
*Blockhead*  
*(I Cant Get No) Satisfaction*  
*Uncontrollable Urge*  
*Mongoloid*  
*Be Stiff*  
*Gates of Steel*  
*Freedom of Choice*  
*Jocko Homo*  
*Smart Patrol/ Mr. DNA*  
*Gut Feeling/Slap Your Mammy*  
*Come Back Jonee*  
*Tunnel of Life*  
*DEVO Corporate Anthem*

The 1.33 X 1 image is as good as it is going to get, with the majority of older footage from the old NTSC analog video source in as good a shape as it is going to get. The Dolby Digital 5.1 mix on the DVD side is pretty good, though the PCM 2.0 16bit/44.1kHz Stereo on the flip CD side is a bit thicker,

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but the Dolby has a slightly better soundstage. Too bad DTS was not available, but it is a terrific concert and the audio delivers well enough.

The extra features are sparse, but interesting. There are two songs recorded as part of a live show wherein DEVO performs as *Dove, the Band of Love*, a parody of Christian Rock. The only other extra is a trailer for the DVD release of DEVO, **Live in the Land of the Rising Sun**, recorded in Japan in 2003 and reviewed elsewhere on this site. It looks like much the same concert as the 1980 version, but the skinny, dorky boys are now overweight, dorky old men.

Freedom of Choice was pretty much the pinnacle of DEVO's career. Nothing they released after that resonated in the same way. Once they reached that peak there was no place to go but down.

Kind of appropriate.

- Wayne Wise

Wayne Wise is a native of Southwestern Pennsylvania currently residing in Pittsburgh. He has earned a Masters degree in clinical psychology and undergraduate degrees in psychology and history. He has worked as a freelance journalist for over ten years. In 1993, he co-created a comic book called Grey Legacy. In 2002 his first novel, **King of Summer**, was published. You can go to [www.wayne-wise.com](http://www.wayne-wise.com) and learn more.