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Devo: Live 1980

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Directed by ?

(Grata/Target/[MVD](#))

Like most folks not connected by umbilical chords to the rock underground in the early 80s, when it comes to Devo, I'm mostly familiar with the hits. (That would be "Whip It" and, to a lesser extent, "Uncontrollable Urge.") **Devo: Live 1980** will inform those masses not onboard the de-evolutionary trip, as it captures the Akron legend in peak commercial and artistic form. In full control of its quirky version of rock theatrics (ridiculous paper costumes, deliberately stiff and robotic stage moves, music stripped down to elemental riffs and simplistic dance rhythms), the brothers Mothersbaugh and Casale brothers and their drummer bounce, well, not merrily, but at least energetically through their then already substantial catalog. All the tunes that made the band big in the new wave underground are here: "Uncontrollable Urge," "Mongoloid," "Girl U Want," "Be Stiff," twisted takes on Johnny Rivers' "Secret Agent Man" and the Rolling Stones' "Satisfaction." But there's plenty of deeper cuts, including "Blockhead," "It's Not Right," "Pink Pussycat," "Freedom of Choice" and an almost frantically rocking "Gut Feeling/Slap Your Mammy." The band is in fine form, and the video and audio, while not perfect in comparison to the current digital era, has aged quite well. Add as bonuses some black and white footage of Devo performing as Dove the Band of Love and a dual disk with a CD version of the show, and you've got a package any Devo fan would adore and any curiosity seekers will find most illuminating. *Michael Toland*

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