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Friday, 21 October 2005

Devo: Live 1980

Contributed by Brent Simon
Thursday, 20 October 2005

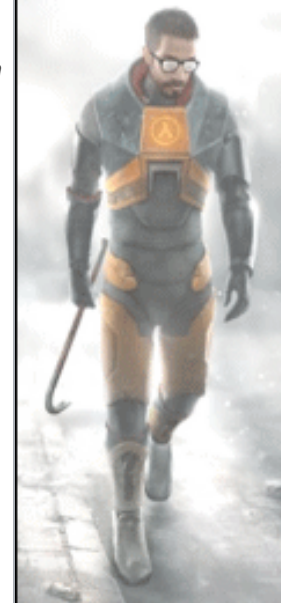


Who doesn't fondly remember Devo from the earliest days of MTV, even if to you they were just a collection of guys seemingly wearing planters on their heads and indiscriminately whipping things in cheesy, backwards-effects fashion? While hardcore Devo fans have had a mini-boon of late with two other concerts released on DVD, this DualDisc presentation offers up a snapshot of the band at their arguable peak, supporting their breakthrough album *Freedom of Choice* and its Top 40 call to flogging, "Whip It." For this reason, *Devo: Live 1980* stands as a telling and enjoyable document for fanatics and casual music buffs looking for a trip down nostalgia lane alike. In capturing a full-length concert from August of 1980 from Petaluma, *Devo: Live 1980* reclaims the group's persona as an actual band, not just some audiovisual stunt.

Although it's hard to fathom in today's media-saturated age, there was a time when there was no MTV, and thus you could actually fall in love with a band's music independent of what they looked like and what pre-set image they were selling or being slotted into. In fact, rock music visuals on TV were usually relegated to the weekend, when you had to burn midnight oil to catch artists on *Saturday Night Live*, *The Midnight Special* or *Fridays*. With mass rock broadcast still in its relative infancy, these performances were often staid and straight-ahead affairs, from lip-synched video shoots to soundcheck feeds at a sparsely populated empty arena on the afternoon of a show. Into this breach rushed the colorful, infectiously poppy Devo.

It's somewhat rare for full-length shows to have survived from this era in good shape, but that's what this DVD is all about. So while all the group's hits up to this point are included, hardcore spuds will also enjoy run-throughs of such relative obscurities as "It's Not Right," "Pink Pussycat" and "Swelling Itching Brain." Alongside "Whip It," of course, other songs from

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the 75-minute set include "Blockhead," "Gut Feeling/Slap Your Mammy," "Planet Earth," "Secret Agent Man," "Girl U Want," "Jocko Homo," "Gates of Steel," "Be Stiff," "Uncontrollable Urge" and a cover of the Rolling Stones' "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction." Backing visuals "Tunnel of Life" and "Devo Corporate Anthem" are also included.

Stereo and Dolby digital 5.1 audio mixes exist, and as a bonus, two cuts ("Praying Hands" and "Shrivel Up") from a Dove Minneapolis concert in 1979 are also included. Obviously the sound quality isn't quite on par with new digital releases, but all things considered this is a superlative find for early '80s rock fans. Pop *Devo: Live 1980* into your DVD player to go back in time for a concert, then take them with you in your car on the other side of this DualDisc release. After only a bit of fussiness in my 2001 model Honda, it worked fine. B (Movie) B-(Disc)

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