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Devo

Live 1980 (Target Video/MVD)
by **Stev0**

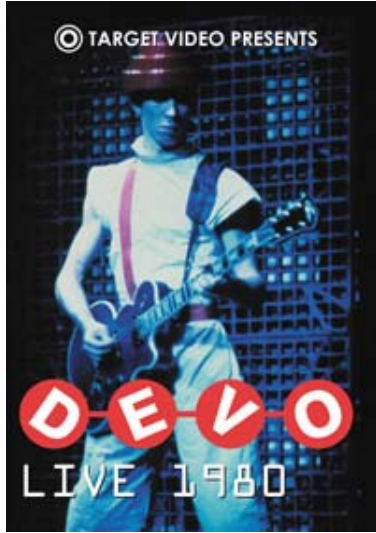
25 years and a million desensitizing news events, movies, records, and stage shows later, and **Devo** is still fucking weird. I can only imagine what it was like in 1980 seeing this band jerking around in their full regalia with no less than four costume changes, espousing de-evolution, demanding satisfaction, and praising the working handicapped. I don't think three or four years of punk could've fully prepared anyone for this. It's not so much shocking as it is, well, weird. Devo had shtick, but also the balls and talent to back it up, preventing them from getting lost in the tide of new wave acts that was washing ashore at the same time.

In the '80s, Target Video captured a lot of the most important bands of the time in various places with varying degrees of success. I have an Avengers video with some amazing footage taken before they had a camera with sound capabilities, so they overdubbed songs off the record. There's also a great Damned video that actually had sound, but was ruined with cheesy special effects which I assume at the time were pretty cutting edge. Luckily, when Devo hit Petaluma, CA towards the end of summer 1980, Target had their shit together. Full color video with audio I've read complaints about, but I don't really find too much fault with. It's a little rough around the edges, but I think it leaves you with more of the feeling of actually being there. The only faults in the video show up in the shots taken from the back of the club. They come off blurry and very early '80s "video" in a way that anyone who's seen other Target videos on actual video tape can relate to. The stage shots are spot on, though.

This is exactly how I want to envision Devo when I think of them. In their prime, and true to their mission. Devo arrive with "Whip It" in their red domes, with the song tightly in their robotic grip, and song by song, they slowly de-evolve, gradually increasing the fluidness of their movements, changing costumes, and increasing the tempo. Mark Mothersbaugh is completely unhinged when they get to "Gut Feeling/Slap Your Mammy" and "Come Back Jonee": Sweating, shaking, wincing with rage, and writhing on the ground. It's moments like this that make me do something I rarely do: Play a live DVD a second time. Live 1980 is as much excellent party/new wave night fodder as it is a fan essential.

Extras include the audio from the entire show on the CD side of the disc, and footage of Devo's Christian alter ego "Dove - The band of love" playing "Praying Hands" and "Shrive! Up" from the M-80 festival of 1979. Performances by Dove, James Chance and the Contortions, The Fleshtones, Tuxedo Moon, and The Suicide Commandos, to name but a few, were filmed and are apparently going to be released on DVD some time in the future. I admit total ignorance to the existence of Dove before seeing this, but it's much more pleasing to the eye than the trailer for the Devo DVD *Live in the Land of the Rising Sun* from one of their modern day trips to Japan. It tarnishes the experience and my advice to you is to skip it. The harsh light of today does not shine so nicely on these men of tomorrow.

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