

DEVO: LIVE 1980 (MUSIC VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS)

At their peak—1978 to 1982—Devo were one of America's best rock bands. Laugh if you will at the stupid "energy dome" hats and the funny costumes, but tight-as-a-drum, mordantly witty Devo fused rock with electronics years before anyone coined such a silly word as "electroclash." *Devo: Live 1980* captures the band during a gig in Petaluma, California, when they were at their commercial zenith. Even if they've begun to lose some of their noisier quirks, they're in great form, and the set list is a virtual greatest hits, from "Whip It" and "Jocko Homo" to the one-two punch of "Smart Patrol/Mr. DNA." Too bad the sound and photography aren't better. **MARK DEMING**



THE TEASER (SOMETHING WEIRD/DIR: GREG VALTERRA)
FRANKIE AND JOHNNY ... WERE LOVERS (IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT/ALAN R. COLBERG)

The late Rene Bond was the freshest, sweetest face in the smut business of the '70s. A curvy doe-eyed gamine, Bond could perform the most explicit acts without losing her irresistible girl-next-door cuddliness. Sadly, the titles featured on this twofer tribute to Ms. Bond are unlikely to win new hearts for this should-be cult sensation. *Frankie and Johnny* amuses with plenty of skin, period charm and the throaty warbling of Bond herself as a sultry lounge singer, but *The Teaser* can be ignored altogether—a tedious white slavery melodrama that hinges on an ugly rape scene. Rene Bond deserves iconic status à la Betty Page, but these rather unexceptional softcore quickies are not the vehicles to excite the popular imagination. **FRED BELDIN**



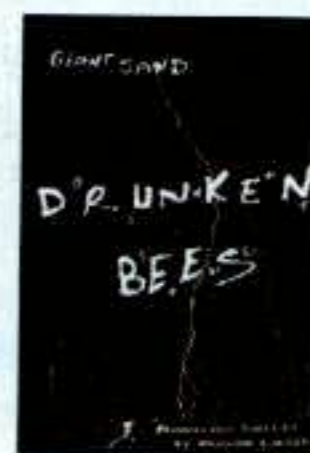
CHARM (KILL ROCKS STARS/DIR: SADIE SHAW AND SARAH REED)

Rosie (Katherine Fuqua) is a pretty but sullen twenty-something living in San Francisco. After a depressing day at work and a soul-killing evening spent with her obnoxious family, Rosie snaps, and kills the creep who hits on her at the bus stop. From this point on, Rosie wavers between catatonia, terror and rage as she finds she's no longer able to control her homicidal impulses. Directed by Sadie Shaw and Sarah Reed (both of indie/garage rockers the Husbands), *Charm* is slowly paced and technically ragged—it was shot in Super 8—but generates an impressive degree of atmosphere. Shaw and Reed get the grit of the hipster settings on film with commendable accuracy. Both are advised to get a better camera next time around, though. **MARK DEMING**



DRUNKEN BEES (SELF-RELEASED/DIR: MARIANNE DISSARD)

Giant Sand has never been easy. The band's records sound simultaneously tossed-off and painstakingly planned, sincere and tongue-in-cheek. Their music isn't willfully difficult, but listeners unwilling to participate will hear little more than songs that aren't quite there yet. This 30-minute film, initially released in 1995, feels much like the seemingly free-form work of the band it chronicles—little narrative develops, and we don't even see much of the band playing music together. Instead, the camera follows Howe Gelb and other Sandsters around Tucson as they loiter in the barrio, visit guitar stores, and drive with no clear destination. It may not add up to much, but a warmth pervades the proceedings. Such warmth, though, is unlikely to convert any naysayers. Then again, conversion probably isn't the intention. **JAMES BARNES**



THE DIRECTORS LABEL DVD SERIES ANTON CORBIJN, JONATHAN GLAZER, MARK ROMANEK, STÉPHANE SEDNAOUI (DIRECTOR'S LABEL/PALM PICTURES)

However compelling a music video might be, however advanced its technique or daring its approach, it remains a commercial. Keep this in mind when enjoying the new cycle of *Directors Label DVD* collections. Anton Corbijn's portfolio includes the simple but dramatic "Enjoy the Silence" from Depeche Mode and Nirvana's harrowing yet tasteless "Heart-Shaped Box." Despite a preference for oversaturated color schemes, Corbijn's work remains dark, even when he's goofing—anyone who can talk both Bono and Ian McCullough into drag deserves a round of applause. Jonathan Glazer's interpretation of UNKLE's "Rabbit in Your Headlights" is startling on first view, but his obsession with man's triumph over nature and gravity becomes numbing with repetition. Commercials for corporate giants like Levis, Volkswagen and Guinness reinforce the theme, showing us how we can bust through walls, surf with wild horses and hang with Samuel L. Jackson if we consume the proper products. Many will prefer to view Stéphane Sednaoui's videos for Garbage, Alanis Morissette and latter-day U2 with the sound turned off. Still, Sednaoui works wonders with Björk, Tricky and the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Those videos crackle with oversized personality and charisma. But avoid the irritating short-film adaptation of "Walk on the Wild Side" at all costs. The Mark Romanek collection is the most consistent. He can even make corndogs like Audioslave and Lenny Kravitz look good. When paired up with a trustworthy muse (Beck, Bowie, Keith Richards and Johnny Fucking Cash), the results are poetry. Thanks to Romanek, mankind can witness the final funky moment of the late Michael Jackson's life, a truly primal outerspace duet with sister Janet called "Scream." That clip and the starkly street-level Jay-Z video "99 Problems" are worth the price of admission. **FRED BELDIN**

