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Devo: Live 1980

By Matthew Hirtes

Monday, 30 January 2006



When Amazon tell me: "Matthew Hirtes, Selling just the last 15 of your past purchases could earn you £89.07", they in no way tempt me. I'd sell my body (ladies, how could you resist?) before I'd even contemplate parting with precious CDs or books. However, if those 15 past purchases had been music DVDs, I wouldn't be so reluctant to sell something back to Amazon.

Allow me to explain. Unless the music DVD, especially a concert, is of historic importance or sentimental value, Ziggy Stardust and the *Spider From Mars – The Motion Picture* in which David Bowie broke up the band at the end of a 1973 concert at the Hammersmith Odeon for example, you'll soon tire of watching it. There have been DVDs in the past which have included a CD of the concert as well – last year's Aimee Mann: *Live at St. Ann's Warehouse* springs to mind. Yet Wienerworld's *Devo: Live 1980* is the first I've encountered which comes as a DVD on one side and a CD on the other.

Brian Eno who produced the band's first album, *Q: Are We Not Men? A: We Are Devo!*, described a Devo concert as "the best live show I have ever seen." Their fans are certainly the most excitable, dancing like dervishes and clapping like performance seals to Devo's strange brew of Jonathan Richman, Talking Heads, and Krafwerk. The Phoenix Theatre in Petaluma was certainly the place to be on Sunday, 17th August 1980.

Kent State art students Jerry Casale and Mark Mothersbaugh formed Devo in Akron, Ohio back in 1972. Their name is an abbreviation of De-evolution, a theory asserting that far from evolving mankind has instead regressed, as can be seen by the dysfunctionality and herd mentality prevalent in contemporary US society. Although naming one of their early tracks 'Mongoloid' was probably not the best way to attract new converts to the cause.

It's a commendation I'd never imagined typing, but here goes: Wienerworld, I salute you! If you truly are pioneers of the DualDisc system, you are geniuses. If not, thanks for bringing the concept to my attention. So, if this takes off I won't be able to keep Mr Wolf from the door by selling DVDs. There remains but one option: you lucky, lucky ladies.

(4/5)

Release Date: 30 January 2006



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