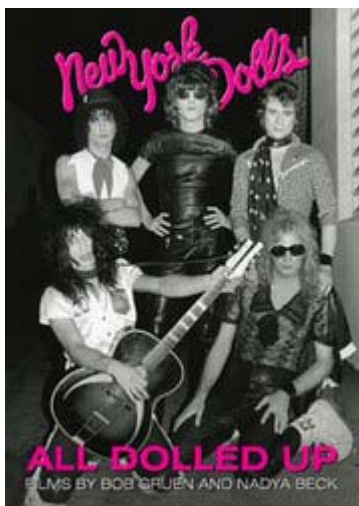


DRASTIC PLASTIC PRESS



NEW YORK DOLLS: ALL DOLLED UP MUSIC VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS

The New York Dolls 2004 reunion sparked a renewed interest in the androgynous proto-punks. With multiple DVD releases related to the band, *All Dolled Up* is just the latest; but unlike the other recent discs it's just as necessary to own this one as it is to possess their two groundbreaking records from the early '70s.

They were the only band that mattered in America during the droll early to mid-70s, and thankfully photographer Bob Gruen had the foresight to document the goings on. He acquired a video recorder—not a cheap or common item at the time—and shot footage of the group, soon winding up in their inner circle.

We see footage of the Dolls like we've never seen before: getting glamorous prior to show time, taking a limo ride to a TV studio, and hanging out on the streets of Hollywood, not to mention incredible live clips of the band at their peak (full performances are included as extras on the DVD). One of the more priceless moments is seeing them parade through an airport, as the camera captures the shocked expressions of everyday Americans. Another is when a female friend reminds Johnny Thunders to "take his vitamins" while on the road, and later, when a story is told about how Thunders punched someone trying to mess with his guitar, an inebriated David Johansen looks straight into the camera and says, "Don't fuck with us, sweetheart." What's striking is just how lovable they all appear. Sure, they're wearing makeup and the most outrageous outfits they could dream up (before one show guitarist Sylvain Sylvain shows off his ass-less chaps, complete with frilly panties), but there is an innocence they would quickly lose. Everyone is so young and it's obvious how much affection they have for each other, but soon it would be all over. Glitter rock ended, drugs became more prevalent, and the band eventually disintegrated after a disastrous paring with Malcolm McLaren, who dressed them in red leather and had them perform in front of a communist flag (this era is briefly documented here, and it's obvious from their expressions that the party was over).

The Dolls had the courage—the balls, if you will—to take it all the way. And that scares people, who, for the most part, stayed away in droves. But it wasn't lost on other wannabe musicians and outsiders, fed-up with what was being passed-off at the time for rock. They influenced a range of performers, and without them there would be no Ramones, no Morrissey, hell, no Poison (hey, you can't be held responsible for your disciples—just ask Jesus). It's not just a fascinating look at the Dolls, but an absorbing peak at the glam scene and pre-punk hipster Americans hanging around in the 1970s. The New York Dolls truly saved rock-n-roll, and thankfully we have oh-so-fabulous reminders like *All Dolled Up*, lest we forget.

--Bart Bealmear



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