

REVIEWS PUNK

This section covers non - Pistols products which I have enjoyed and may be of interest to Sex Pistols' fans.

New York Dolls - All Dolled Up (Wienerworld WNRD 2356)

Incredible. I wasn't expecting this to be, well...like this. I was anticipating another documentary with lots of talking heads and hindsight-skewed recollections. I was totally wrong. This film consists entirely of Bob Gruen and his wife Nadya Beck's footage of the Dolls, shot on a portable black and white video recorder over a period of three years. They amassed over forty hours of the Dolls on stage and off - with this amount of footage to work with, it's no surprise the resulting movie is by far and away the best ever study of the band.

In an enlightening interview with Bob Gruen conducted for the DVD, Bob explains that when he purchased the video recorder he never envisaged making money or movies, no one even had video cassette players, so he could never sell tapes of his film. It was purely as a hobby which he could share with the band.

Three decades later and this old black and white footage has brought the Dolls back to life. Life, they are full of it, certainly early on, as the fresh-faced band relax on a grassy knoll in LA recalling how they all came together. They also look so healthy, particularly Johnny Thunders, who seems very together as the film starts, but much less so towards the end. The live footage filmed at such famous venues as Max's Kansas City and Kenny Castaways is superb. We even get to see the Dolls flying to LA, then driving down Sunset Strip for the first time looking for the Whisky A Go Go. We also get to witness Peter Jordon deputising for Arthur Kane, but most importantly, we get to witness what a phenomenal live band the New York Dolls were.

The bonus material alone makes the DVD worth getting. Particularly the twelve uncut performances, which feature in part in the film, but here they are... complete. Other music DVD's could learn a lot from this: extras that provide a treat for the fans. In addition to the aforementioned interview with Bob Gruen, there are two separate commentary tracks by David Johansen and Sylvain Sylvain (with Bob Gruen). Both are good natured; Sylvain particularly has great recollection and is a mine of information. These act as documentaries in their own right and give an enlightening insight into the events. Most biopics are built around such reminiscing, here they are a DVD extra, such is the quality of this release. Utterly unmissable.

Review by Phil Singleton (June 2006)

Punk Rock: An Oral History **John Robb** **Ebury Press (£14.99)**

Now this is a big book! Whereas most books released to coincide with the 30th anniversary of punk are going to focus on '76 - '78, An Oral History takes the story up to 1984, which I remember myself was the year punks seemed to disappear overnight from the streets. The book is not a variation on England's Dreaming, but is a collection of the views of many of the participants. A vast collection. Although some of the anecdotes are familiar, there are plenty that are new. More than enough to make this worth checking out. The story is told in a roughly chronological order, with individual bands and topics pulled together, which means you can dip in and absorb yourself in a particular favourite band, or give yourself a crash course in something not so familiar.

All the major bands and events are covered from both the first and second waves of punk, along with