



**New York Dolls: *All Dolled Up*
[MVD]**

According to everybody who was there, the New York Dolls rocked better live than on record. Thanks to Bob Gruen and Nadya Beck, now us freshcuts can see that it was true. With the same eye for detail and drama that made Gruen's rock photos so iconic, *All Dolled Up* amounts to the definitive visual artifact of the Dolls' sleazy onstage majesty. Gruen and Beck wisely avoid the Ken Burns trap-- instead of a misty hindsight hagiography, they stick to their original single-camera, black & white video footage and the occasional TV or promo clip. There's no narrator, no band members waxing nostalgic, no talking-head testimonials from critics or industry types or Steven Tyler.

For all its rawness, the live footage smokes (12 full-song clips are included as DVD extras). Offstage, the hilariously bitchy David Johansen feeds groupies lines about his supposed opera background, theorizes earnestly about "self-liberation," and opines that people in L.A. "don't really have any creative drive, they just don't know what to do with themselves". We see Sylvain Sylvain's underarm hair get a trim for the TV audience, sad-sack Arthur Kane explain the misadventure that put a cast on his wrist, and some female relative of Sylvain's advise him to take his vitamins while on tour. *All Dolled Up* finds a spectacularly confident band at their hopeful peak, when it seemed like the Dolls really could become the biggest rock band in the world. Instead of hiring Dave Marsh to tell us why that didn't happen, Gruen and Beck let us believe that it did. -- Jason Toon

<http://www.pitchforkmedia.com/features/weekly/06-06-05-dvd-summer06.shtml>