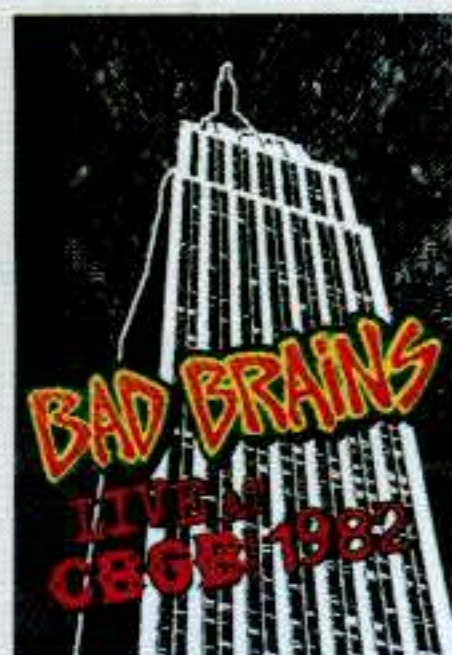


eye candy

**BAD BRAINS**

LIVE AT CBGB 1982 DVD [MVD]

This snapshot from punk's early days was filmed on-location during a few consecutive Bad Brains gigs at CBGB in 1982. Not surprisingly, the lack of technology at that time makes the footage somewhat unfortunate. In 1982, video cameras were not only rare, they were about the size of today's microwaves. However, once you're beyond that, you can begin to enjoy and appreciate the legacy the Bad Brains were leaving during this era in East Coast music.

Punk rock in 1982 looked a lot different from how it looks now. In fact, its depiction on this DVD almost seems like a parody of itself. Don't be fooled, though: it's raw energy and pure rebellion, nothing else. With that youthful exuberance, bands like the Bad Brains set the soundtrack. This footage is from a three-day CBGB hardcore festival at which the Bad Brains played each night, beginning on Christmas Eve. The guys' dreads may be as short as their songs, but they're clearly a defined band at this point in 1982. H.R. is in full effect, effortlessly controlling the crowd amid wild stage dives and dozens of show-goers as they flail across the stage.

When I first heard the Bad Brains way back when, I was in awe. Their reggae tunes were flawless. Their hardcore songs were life-determining. Tracks like "Rock for Light" and "Pay to Cum" were instantly burned into my head. Their live show was not one to be missed. H.R. worked the audience each and every night with his crazy antics and swinging dreads. Most times, he would end a Bad Brains set with a back flip. Ask me today what my all-time favorite band is and I would say the Bad Brains. This DVD reminds me of why.

-Gus Peña

**THE CLASH**

RUDE BOY DVD [SONY/BMG]

Here is a long foreign flick that *won't* put you to sleep. It's the Clash in a re-release of the classic and historic *Rude Boy*, a film that's as much about the late, great Joe Strummer and his epic band as the Clash's extremely important message of racial tolerance. This project straddles the line between documentary and drama. Filmed in 1978 while the Clash was on its "Clash on Patrol" and "Sort It Out" tours, *Rude Boy* follows a disillusioned Brit youth named Ray, who quits his job at a London porn shop so he can roadie for the band.

Despite the varying levels of volume (keep your remote close at hand) and the intrinsic tendency of Brits to mumble incoherently with thick regional accents, *Rude Boy* is a great work, both in the visual and sonic sense. It shows the dirty, gritty, and often violent real world of touring, including actual backstage and fantastic live concert footage of the Clash. All this is impressively blended with the ongoing drama of our shallow, somewhat racist protagonist, the oft-drunken young Ray.

It's also interesting to see how arrogant members of the Clash can be. Even though this is a semi-drama, there are several scenes where the band members' rude egoism comes across as quite real. As we observe the slovenly Ray perform his roadie duties, the messages in the band's lyrics begin to sink in and affect his thinking. Despite the group's apparent self-centeredness, it's easy to see how much Strummer and company appreciate and draw from black culture. The hard reggae influences, the oft-repeated messages of tolerance and wisdom in the band's lyrics, and Joe Strummer's clear, simple message to Ray that he wishes more blacks would come to the shows: All this elevates the movie from a mere rock fan's fantasy to a film of genuine importance. It's got a lot of special DVD features, too: deleted scenes, interviews with the two filmmakers and star Ray Grange, and a lot more.

Always remember: Black people invented rock 'n' roll in the first place.

-Marcus Solomon

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**

BLOODIED BUT UNBOWED: BLOODSHOT RECORDS' LIFE IN THE TRENCHES DVD [BLOODSHOT]

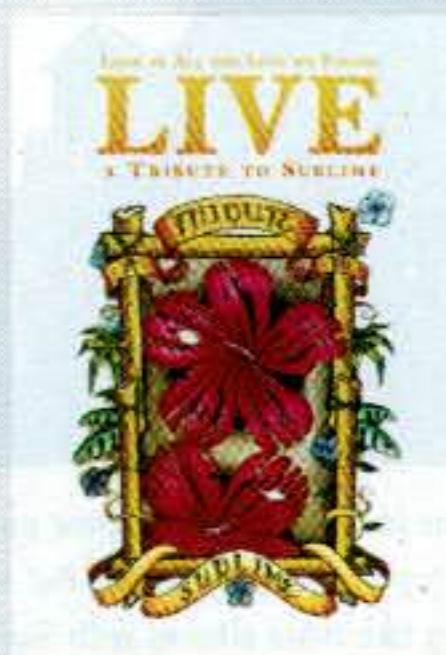
Mainstream popularity of alt-country may ebb and flow, but the honky-tonk zeal of Bloodshot Records has been solid for the last dozen years. *Bloodied but Unbowed* chronicles the label's twangy history by including more than 30 videos/live performances and eight short films/documentaries, as well as galleries of gig posters and photos. After this three-hour crash course, the attentive student will be familiar with Bloodshot's history, mission, roster – and perhaps above all – its sense of humor.

Information-wise, this thing is spot-on. Entertainment-wise, *Bloodied but Unbowed* can be hit or miss. Footage of artist performances ranges in quality from pilled fuzz to high gloss. Ryan Adams' live rendition of "Amy" is not only a visual bore, but his sped-up tempo detracts from the song's true beauty, as better heard on Adams' solo debut, *Heartbreaker*. And though the band's ability to rock a crowd is well documented here, this recording of an early Old 97s gig is decidedly lackluster. Flip through the menu, though, and the DVD is redeemed by the awe-inspiring instrumentation of Split Lip Rayfield and the rock-ability of the Detroit Cobras. And on and on.

What's most delightful about *Bloodied but Unbowed* is, surprisingly, the kitschy little five-minute documentary about Bloodshot's journey thus far, appropriately titled "Blood, Sweat, and Beers: A Bloodshot Primer." Narrated by artist Sally Timms, the flick takes a humorous and unabashed look at the label's inception and the scene that sprouted it. Moreover, Timms spells out exactly what Bloodshot's intentions were (and, apparently, continue to be): "Bloodshot dedicated itself to encouraging and documenting the cross-pollination of the spirit and sound of punk and the craft and tradition of country, bluegrass, soul, and roots, all wrapped up with a general disinterest and disdain for the confinements of mainstream taste-making and genrefication."

The bottom line is this: If you're a long-time lover of this label or insurgent country in general, or if you have a healthy interest in acquainting yourself with Bloodshot's current lineup, this DVD is for you. If it's only the big names that pique your curiosity, hang up your cowboy hat and look for something less expansive.

-Jodie Kautzmann

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**

LOOK AT ALL THE LOVE WE FOUND: LIVE A TRIBUTE TO SUBLIME DVD [MVD]

The soul of the sadly departed Bradley Nowell is immortal, as are the souls of the very much alive Sublime cofounders Bud Gaugh and Eric Wilson. And so, too, is the amazingly brilliant music they created. There are something like three Sublime tributes making the rounds right now, but *this* is the one you should get. It features performances by Los Lobos, Ozomatli, Blackalicious, Fishbone, the Ziggens, Bargain Music, and many more. The camera work is great, the editing is effective and easy on the eyes, and the sound quality is tremendous.

Most of the time, watching a concert on video is like eating a picture of food: it's just not the same. Of course, this is still a concert video, but there is something truly transcendent here that can actually make the viewer forget it's only a recording. Energy cannot be created or destroyed; it can only be transformed. The intense energy and enlightened spirit that was discovered, influenced, and set free by the illustrious Sublime can never die, so these many talented artists came together for the purpose of paying tribute to one of the most original, influential, and mystical fusion bands that's ever existed.

Brad Nowell may have been a musical genius, but his foolish curiosity led him to the evil world of heroin addiction, and thus robbed him and his two closest friends and decades of fame, fortune, and the simple joy of playing together. It also deprived the world of an unknown amount of musical brilliance that was yet to be. What might this man have accomplished if he hadn't died so young? Looking at this very fine concert footage, we can glean an idea of what might have been. Who would've thought one could combine seemingly unlike musical genres such as punk, reggae, rap, metal, and calypso into one flowing, spectacular sound that appeals to so many? What if the rest of the world could follow the example set by all the artists who came together to pay tribute to a band that joined the music of so many diverse cultures?

Musicians from virtually every field, of almost every ethnicity, coming together and creating wonderful music that brings happiness and joy: That is truly an example for the rest of the world to follow. Unfortunately, the world does not work that way, our heroes are flawed human beings, and the utopia of blissful music eventually fades back into silence. Not to despair! Just play this DVD again and crank the music CD loud enough for all to hear.

-Marcus Solomon