

the Reel Bodeans dominated the town. There were many “arty” type bands and a couple cool places to play, like the Reptile House and the Intersection.

When Mustard Plug began, however, the ‘80s hardcore scene had begun to wane and they were a band without a scene. However, they never backed down,

first band: new wave-influenced Sweet Madness. From those two camps others emerged, including some outrageous, fucked-up performance art that might surprise even those in L.A. and New York City. Bands came and went, but each had their unique style and sound. Similar to the scene I grew up with in Northern

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—Kurt Morris, *Spokanarchy!*

played to larger and larger audiences, and begun to foray into neighboring states, eventually touring Japan and Europe. Growing up in the same town, I shared their excitement when they recorded at Bill Stephenson’s Blasting Room studios in Colorado. The idea of recording with the Descendents’ drummer was outlandish to us young punks growing up in West Michigan.

I enjoyed this DVD far more than I thought. The interviews with members and former members—interspersed with live videos and directed videos—were fun to watch and told an interesting story of a band who, against all odds, skanked their way out of the Midwest. —Steve Hart (Hopeless)

Spokanarchy!: Where Were You in ‘82?: DVD

Kids don’t have much of a choice about where they’re raised. They have to make do with what they have, wherever they are. *Spokanarchy!* is a documentary about those kids and the bands and community they formed in Spokane, Washington, in the late 1970s and ‘80s. This eighty-minute film speaks with a number of people who felt that their hometown was boring and backwards but chose to make their own community of like-minded outcasts in the Lilac City (that’s Spokane’s nickname and, yes, I had to look it up).

I was initially skeptical about the legitimacy of such a film. The scene there couldn’t have been very good. Nobody knows about any Spokane bands. It was only a city of approximately 175,000 people in the ‘70s and ‘80s. What could there be to tell? Evidently, quite a bit.

Spokanarchy! does a competent, coherent job of showing the foundation of the scene. The film identifies the beginning of Spokane’s punk movement with some art freaks (including the guy behind Keyboard Cat) and moves into the

Indiana, what occurred in Spokane was a place that was so small, everyone knew one another and from that came a fairly dysfunctional community.

Although a few particular personalities shine through in the film, it seems a wide variety of people played a role in building up the scene, despite the fight from police, city government, and sexist, homophobic rednecks. People moving away, as well as drug abuse, played a role in tearing things down. Certain individuals passed away due to the influence of heroin, while others still deal with its repercussions to this day. (There is a harsh scene that shows Steve Stierwalt—a musician who seemed to be in a million bands—looking for veins on his bruised, drug-wracked body to inject a needle full of methadone that he has been hooked on for twenty years.)

Through watching *Spokanarchy!*, the viewer gets the feeling that many of these individuals formed life-long friendships and a community through punk music where everybody knew everybody, and in many cases, a number of us that got into punk in places that weren’t major metropolises were searching for just such a thing, too. In that sense, it makes *Spokanarchy!* a film with which I could easily identify and enjoy.

Whatever it took, these punks seemed to have found a cohesive group that worked for them at the time, despite its dysfunctions. However, the film doesn’t gloss over the problems and struggles. It helps that none of these bands got big—it instead focuses on the individuals who comprised the whole. *Spokanarchy!* is the story of the little scene that could. But didn’t. And in some ways that makes for a more moving, engaging documentary. —Kurt Morris (spokanarchy.com)



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