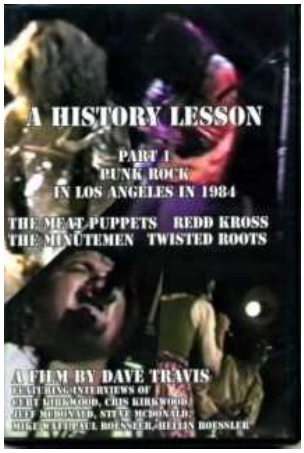
History Lesson Part 1: Punk Rock In Los Angeles In 1984 DVD

POSTED BY MARTIJN ON MARCH - 23 - 2011



History Lesson Part 1: Punk Rock In Los Angeles In 1984

History Lesson Part 1: Punk Rock In Los Angeles In 1984 DVD (Director: Dave Travis; MVD Visual)

Growing up in 1970s, the specter of the year 1984 loomed, ominous and large, in the distance, thanks to George Orwell's famous novel and the Cold War paranoia that still held the Western world in its grasp. Now that it is not just in the past but actually damn-near ancient history, 1984 continues to have a special presence for many due to the wealth of amazing music that came out of the time—particularly the Los Angeles punk scene, which consisted mainly of bands that are not considered to be punk at all by the average revisionist music critic. Well, as Homer Simpson might mutter, 'Stupid critics…'. Filmmaker Dave Travis was right in the thick of L.A. punk in 1984, and this—ostensibly the first of many documentaries to come (and please keep 'em coming, Dave!)—focuses solely on 4 bands: Minutemen, Redd Kross, The Meat Puppets, and Twisted Roots. It's hard to tell exactly when the interview segments were filmed, as they certainly don't date to 1984 but also don't appear to have been done within the past year or two, but they're generally interesting and informative, if overly informal and sparsely edited. The gold here is the vintage footage, which is predominantly of high visual quality and above-average audio quality, of these bands tearing up the stages of various L.A. area venues 27 years ago. I could see new Minutemen footage every day of my life and never tire of it, and the fiery interplay between D. Boon and Mike Watt on the included performance of 'Bob Dylan Wrote Propaganda Songs' is maybe the best I've ever seen. The footage of Redd Kross is a real treasure, as Travis just happened to have filmed the one and only RK gig to feature The Bangles' Vicki Peterson on guitar—and it's an incendiary performance that showcases the true punk fury of one of the most misunderstood and unfairly maligned bands of the era. The Meat Puppets footage is also sure to turn some heads, particularly amongst the younger generations who honestly have no idea that Nirvana was nothing more than a Meat Puppets tribute band with a fat truckload of cash to spend on publicity. Watch the performance of 'Lake Of Fire' here, then watch the DVD of Nirvana on MTV Unplugged; it's a bit like Gus Van Sant's shot-for-shot remake of 'Psycho', except in slow-motion—what's the point? The point, actually, can be found in the footage found here of Curt Kirkwood daring someone in the crowd to throw a bottle at his head. After taking the smash to his face with barely a wince, Kirkwood laughs it off in a 'fair is fair… I told 'em to do it' manner. Twisted Roots is probably the least well-known band featured, since they didn't leave a recorded legacy like the other 3 acts, but they were far from a bunch of nobodies. Formed and led by Paul Roessler (45 Grave, The Deadbeats, The Screamers), whose interview footage is not to be missed, the band also featured Paul's sister Kira (who was the longest-serving bassist in Black Flag's storied history) and a host of other L.A. punks (including, at one time, Pat Smear of The Germs). For a final word on this DVD, refer to the title: A History Lesson. **The Impaler**

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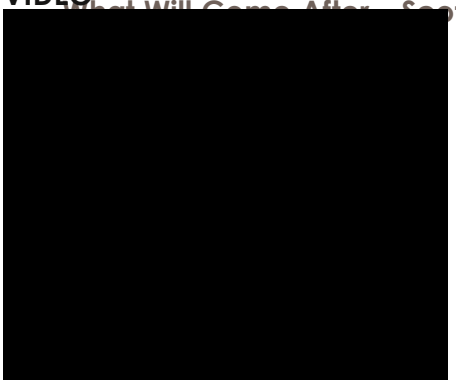

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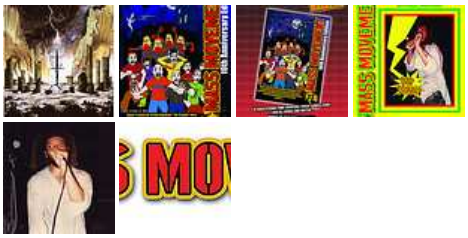
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