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The B-52s With The Wild Crowd: Live In Athens, GA (Eagle Blu-ray)/Dinosaur Jr. Live At The 9:30 Club In The Hands of The Fans (MVD DVD)/Phil Collins Live At Montreux 2004 (Eagle Blu-ray)

Picture: B-/C/B- Sound: B/C+/B Extras: B-/C+/C-
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A new set of concert discs from established artists show us some highs and lows of legacy acts.

The B-52 With The Wild Crowd: Live In Athens, GA

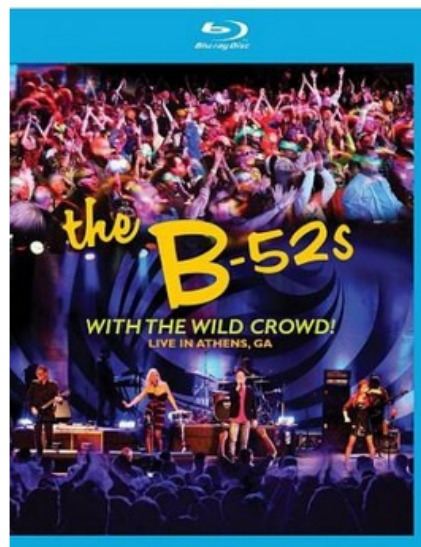
was taped in 2011 and two things should be said for starters. It is amazing the band stayed together past R.E.M. and this is the entire original band with Cindy Wilson back and reunited with fellow bandmates Kate Pierson, Fred Schneider and Keith Strickland. That should have been bigger news at the time it happened, especially since they are as impressive as ever and still manage to have the energy that made them one of the best New Wave/Punk/Dance/Pop bands in the business.

Delivering a strong 20-song set, including megahits *Roam* and *Love Shack*, early classic *Rock Lobster* and fan favorites like *Private Idaho*, making them as much the pride of Athena, Georgia as anything. As is the case with the greatest bands in music history, when the original members reassemble, they become that band fully again and that is exactly what happens again here. This was a real surprise and pleasure, seeing that the band (unlike many of its contemporaries) still got it and that is part of what makes this one of the best music Blu-rays of the year, a status it will hold onto for the rest of the year with ease.

Extras include a nice, long, fun, on camera interview with the band and illustrated booklet inside the case with some text information.

Formed a few years later and also having a period where they were not together in their original form before reuniting, **Dinosaur Jr. Live At The 9:30 Club In The Hands of The Fans** has the Punk/Alternative Rock band playing their entire classic **Bug** album in another concert from 2011, but this time, they have some hand-picked fans shooting footage of the performance.

The Beastie Boys did this with **Awesome... I (@#%!) Shot That** (reviewed elsewhere on this site) and the makers (including **Year That Punk Broke** director Dave Markey) do the same on a smaller scale and it



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 > Family (2006/MVD Visual DVD)
 > Rifftrax Live: Reefer Madness/Plan 9 From Outer Space/House of Haunted Hill (Legend Blu-rays)
 > Blade of Kings (2004/aka The Twins Effect II/Well Go USA Blu-ray w/DVD)
 > Neverland (2011/Vivendi DVD) + The Three Musketeers (2011/Summit Blu-ray3D/Blu-ray)
 > J. Edgar (2011/Warner Blu-ray + DVD + Ultraviolet Copy)
 > A Very Harold and Kumar 3-D Christmas (2011/Warner Blu-ray 3D + Blu-ray + DVD + Ultraviolet Copy)

is really just as effective as the band shows they also still have it. I was not as familiar with the band, but always thought they were good and never understood why they did not at least have one big crossover hit of some kind because they deserves some more commercial success than they received, even if some fans would disapprove. Still, this is a solid DVD and if you have never seen or heard of them, a great place to start.

Extras include On Stage interview with Henry Rollins, Rollins explaining the history of the 9:30 Club, backstage interview with the fans, J & Dave Market Interview and bonus live footage in a Jar & The Wagon, which is better than many larger releases.

Finally, we have **Phil Collins Live At Montreux 2004**, the third Eagle/Collins release we have covered to date and it is our lamest entry here. The first was an interesting analysis of his **Face Value** album and the second, a horrible concert. This time, we get two horrible concerts, as a bonus analog-taped 1996 Montreux performance is also here, but wow, he was lazy and bored even then.

Even non-fans would have to wonder why he is not drumming in the 2004 show, why we get weak performances of the already weak *Two Hearts*, *Invisible Touch*, *Against All Odds*, obnoxious *Sussudio* (who would name their child that?) and once-listenable *In The Air Tonight* on the 1994 show where he still drums or 2004 butchery of Cyndi Lauper’s *True Colors*, awful *Groovy Kind of Love*, *I Missed Again*, tired-on-arrival *Separate Lives*, uber-annoying *One More Night*, *Don’t Lose My Number*, gutting of The Supremes’ *You Can’t Hurry Love*, *Take Me Home* and horrific *Easy Lover* all add up to show that Collins helped kill the music business with a string of hits so terrifying that even Jason and Freddie would run away. Any hope this would be better than the later show was wishful thinking. And in two concerts!!!

An illustrated booklet is included as an extra, as is the earlier concert, but more is not better here. This is for fans and those who like to torture themselves with recent oldies from hell in the past.

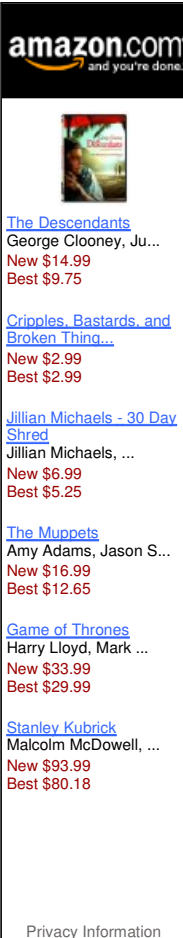
The 1080i 1.78 X 1 digital High Definition image transfer on both Blu-rays are about on par with each other, but **B-52s** should look better because of the colorful nature of the stage show, however, this early HD shoot cannot handle the color range and that causes anomalies with the HD format that film would never have trouble with, reminding one of the early limits of analog TV (you had to film shows with TV contrast limits in mind) and analog videotape (i.e., too much video white would turn yellow, etc.) proving once again that digital and HD are not the technical miracle they are being touted as being. Still, like the **Chris Issac Soundstage** double feature Blu-ray, it is a fun concert visually and you should ignore the visual limits.

The anamorphically enhanced 1.78 X 1 image on **Dinosaur** is a mix of video formats, mostly handled by amateur cameramen, so the result is softer and more choppy than an outright concert, which is to be expected. Otherwise, this is fine for the format.


The DTS-HD MA (Master Audio) 5.1 lossless mixes on both Blu-rays is surprisingly goods, even with the **Collins** show sounding well-recorded, actually making it more difficult to sit through. The **B-52s** has a slight fidelity edge and is a nice, lively live recording that really delivers and fans (especially those unhappy that no high fidelity digital audio version of their work has been issued yet) will be happy with the soundstage and range of this mix. Lossy Dolby Digital 5.1 and uncompressed PCM 2.0 Stereo tracks are also included, but they are no match for the DTS-MA in both cases. The lossy Dolby Digital 5.1 on **Dinosaur** has its moments, but due to the multiple-tapings, is not consistent in soundfield, so expect anomalies.

- Nicholas Sheffo

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