



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2011

X (the band) - "The Unheard Music" DVD Review (MVD Video)

THE STATIC JACKS PLAY MHOW ON JAN. 19TH



Earlier this fall, the original lineup of X regrouped for a limited run of shows where they played the entirety of their 1980 debut *Los Angeles* and screened their little-seen 1986 bio-pic *The Unheard Music* prior to the show. While similar minded bio-pics like *Decline of Western Civilization* (1981) achieved cult status, *The Unheard Music* seemed to slip under the radar of most people at the time of its original release.

The Static Jacks by thestaticjacks

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*The Unheard Music* was filmed between 1980 and 1985 by Angel City Productions – a group of first-time film makers. The film captures the evolution of X over the course of their first four albums and also documents the evolution and decline of the LA punk scene. All of this is set against the background of the Reagan administration's "Morning in America" and a hostile and apathetic music industry that were looking for the next AOR stadium act.

Director W.T. Morgan and the Angel City team do an excellent job of capturing the personality of each of the band members through candid, 'at-home' interviews along with a number of high-energy live and rehearsal performances from X. This footage is inter-spliced with pre-MTV music videos (for the song "The Unheard Music" and "Because I Do"), a variety of topical and stock footage and interviews with various personalities from the LA music scene. These interviews range from Brendan Mullen giving a tour of his short-lived punk club The Masque (which was in the basement of a porno theater) to an MCA Records executive talking about how he didn't hear the commercial appeal in X's music and he and MCA were expecting *Point Blank* to become the "next big thing" (aka the next Journey). There is also a reoccurring thread about a letter that Slash Records received from a girl who claimed that the lyrics from "Los Angeles" were stolen from her life story (but she wasn't going to sue) so Angel City turned this theme into a mini-video featuring actress Elizabeth Foley.

The individual footage with the members of X include DJ Bonebrake demonstrating a polyrhythmic beat that he came up with on his apartment stove, John and Exene playing an acoustic Hank Williams number in their apartment, Exene giving a 'behind the scenes' tour of the Whisky prior to its closing in 1982, Billy goofing at home discussing his musical upbringing (and there is some footage of him playing the clarinet) and John explaining how the band came together and how he was able to acquire the "X" from the marquee of the old "Ex-Lax Building".

#### **Songs, in order of performance:**

- Los Angeles
- Year One
- We're Desperate
- Because I Do
- Beyond & Back
- Come Back to Me
- Soul Kitchen (w/ Ray Manzarek on backing vocals)
- White Girl
- The Once Over Twice
- Motel Room in My Bed
- The Unheard Music
- Real Child of Hell
- Johnny Hit & Run Paulene
- I Must Not Think Bad Thoughts
- The World's a Mess; It's in My Kiss
- The Have Nots

"Well in the early 80s, there was a lot of attention on the punk scene then, because it was a revolutionary movement and was important and all that, and then students from UCLA wanted to make videos about us and we didn't really take it very seriously but further on we realized they were serious. Eventually they finished and it was called *The Unheard Music* and I'm glad they did it because I think as far as documentaries go, it's really good. It really is a good capture of that time and the music business. And it focuses on us, and it also focuses on the bigger picture. I'm a documentary fan. I love any kind of documentary, pretty much." -- Exene Cervanka (from an [interview with Helen Bach](#))

To celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the film, Angel City Productions released a "Silver Anniversary" special edition DVD on December 13th with a new film transfer and 5.1 mix of the original documentary along with bonus footage which includes previously unreleased live footage ("Some Other Time"), a current 25th Anniversary 'look-back' interview with John and Exene along with an inside look into the making of the film with the members of Angel City Productions (circa. 1983).

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