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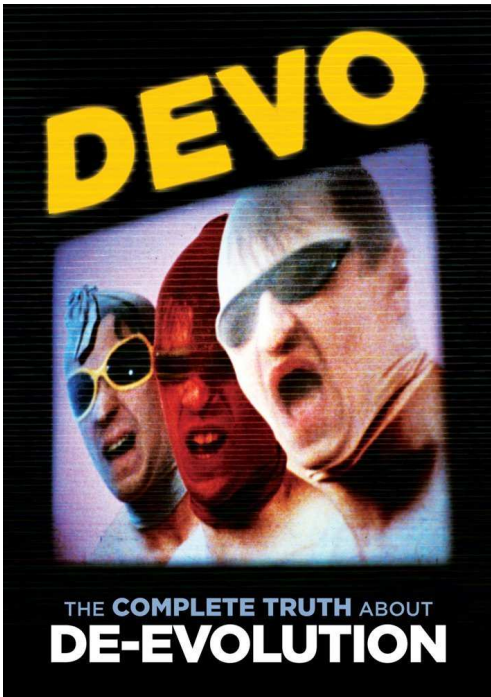
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February 14, 2014

Review: DEVO – The Complete Truth about De-Evolution



Cover of "[The Complete Truth About De-Evolution](#)"

Sometimes, I find it odd that there were not more comprehensive collections of music videos by bands released during the Golden Age of DVD. Plenty were released, though they were largely cash-in budget titles, with little regard to quality, curation, or historical context. The music video collection occupies a space akin to the Greatest Hits album, with the extra requirement of demanding your eyes, as well as your ears. In this post-MTV era, the music video is best suited for YouTube over disc.

Yet, if there's any group more deserving of a well-curated music video retrospective, it's [DEVO](#). DEVO created over 20 music videos in their career, many before the rise of MTV. Even before they released their first single, they had already created a short film built around music videos for two songs: a cover of Johnny Rivers "Secret Agent Man," and their anthem "Jocko Homo." Both songs would go on to become iconic. Then there's DEVO's biggest hit, "Whip It." Indeed, the success of that song is as attributable to its video as to almost anything else.

Originally released on Laserdisc, [The Complete Truth About De-Evolution](#), collected almost all of DEVO's music videos from 1974 to 1990, along with early live footage, interviews, commentary, and slideshows. The original disc lacked only [Bruce Conner](#)'s experimental film collage for "Mongoloid," and the video for "Theme From Doctor Detroit," from the soundtrack to Dan Ackroyd's 1983 flop. The 2003 DVD release on Rhino Video added "Mongoloid," but dropped 1984's "[Are You Experienced?](#)" video due to complaints from the Jimi Hendrix estate. Rhino's release was also marred by laziness: transfer glitches, slideshows that forced viewers to pause the disc and skip frame by frame, and atrocious cover art.

The MVD release mitigates most of these issues. It's still missing "Are You Experienced?" though a tantalizing entry in the extras menu provides another means of viewing it. It adds "Doctor Detroit" and "Mongoloid," as well as some live clips from the various MVD DEVO releases. There's even a performance of "Mongoloid" from DEVO's 1996 reunion show at Sundance, the first time any footage from this show has ever been officially released. Add on top of that new menus, what looks like a new transfer from Laserdisc, and working slideshows, the MVD release is an improvement over Rhino's version in nearly every way.

Nearly. There are still issues with the MVD version, including new, god-awful title cards for the videos. An audio glitch means that "Satisfaction" has all its audio in the right channel. A slideshow of DEVO merchandise somehow failed to make the leap from the Rhino DVD to MVD's disc. Finally, but least surprising, there are no videos of DEVO

songs made after 1990. These are minor issues, save for the “Satisfaction” audio, but if you’re a hardcore Spud, you’ll want to know what to expect before handing over your money. But, hand over your money you should. The disc is priced to move—my copy set me back \$13 with shipping, which is a steal for something that’s still such an upgrade from the Rhino DVD.

I have to wonder if MVD’s release of *The Complete Truth* is a prelude to a future, more comprehensive release. The bonus feature of clips from *The Men Who Make the Music*, and the Sundance footage at least imply that MVD has more DEVO in the pipeline. Even if this release is only a stopgap, it’s worth picking up. Though you can watch all of these videos online, the bonus features make this a must have for any DEVO-tee. Upgrade from your laserdisc, toss your Rhino DVD in the garbage where it belongs, and retire your worn out *We’re All DEVO* VHS tape. It’s not perfect, and it’s not truly complete, but this is as good as it’s probably going to get for DEVO.

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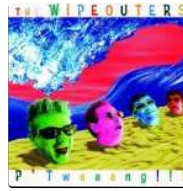
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