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DVD Review

'The Velvet Underground Under Review'

In stores April 11th

Lou Reed, John Cale and Nico brought the rock music world to its knees in the mid sixties with outré songs like 'Venus in Furs' and 'Heroin', and introduced the 'long tone' and urban poetry to the record buying public. Cale was a classical music scholar from Wales and Reed got his start as a popular song writer for Pickwick Records, writing knockoffs of radio top ten hits. Once he saw them, Andy Warhol grabbed the Velvets to be part of his pioneering multi-media art shows. He brought in a beautiful girl because he thought every group should have one; the one he picked was German born actress Nico. But there already was girl - drummer Maureen Tucker, who is credited with creating the art rock drumming style, and once famously using garbage cans when her drum kit was stolen. This disc is a scholarly piece using archival footage of REALLY early gigs, interviews with the surviving members, except Reed and 'Velvets' biographers. There are live and studio recordings of 'White Light/White Heat', 'Sweet Jane' and more, with still photography covering those intoxicating years in New York's rock underground. And it made history of one of the first bands to sing a song about s and m. Surprisingly, the band earned its place in rock and roll history with little to no radio air time, but these songs are instantly familiar to most of us.

- Anne Brodie