ON THE LITTLE SCREEN

That 70's Show, The Style Council, and SCTV!

The Style Council – "Live at Full House Rock Show" (MVD)
The Style Council was one of Paul Weller's more ambitious projects, a musical marriage with keyboard player Mick Talbot, and live performances were an iffy proposition. Weller's ex-wife, vocalist DC Lee, was a regular band member, and while she was certainly capable of throwing down a useful jazz-informed backing vocal, she also has a nasty habit of songing off-key. Thankfully, this set from the German "Full House" series (an eighties version of "Beat Club," really) is largely spot-on, although a bit short.

Caught between the mod-spiked soul of The Jam and the more guitar heavy progressive feel of his later solo work, Weller used the Style Council as a curious outlet for his anti-Thatcher politics, marrying the oft-barbed lyrical witticisms with big, sweeping and sophisticated jazz-pop melodies that even broke through to stingy U.S. radio ("You're the Best Thing" was a bona fide hit); the band appealed to the same romantic soul camp that embraced early Sade(before she became all Adult Contemporary dreck, all day).

This was filmed toward the end of their run, touring in support of "The Cost of Loving" before their final release, "Confessions of a Pop Group" – an additional recording, "A Decade of Modernism" was held until the UK release of a Style Council box set.

Weller's singing is impassioned here, and Lee holds her own through spirited renditions of "Money Go Round," the deliciously cocktail-soaked "With Everything to Lose," and "Shout to the Top," among others. A full able band doesn't hurt either, including occasional woodwinds and a reliable rhythm section. The situation turns a little grim during Lee's attempt to cover Rufus & Chaka's "Everlasting Love" – a bit ambitious, but if that's the worst it gets we'll all be fine.

A bonus interview with Weller reveals his cocky but charming nature, which carries him through to this day.