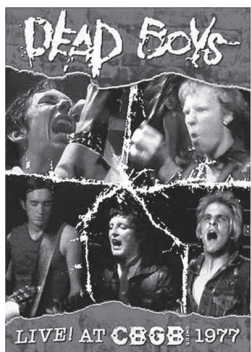


MOLSON PRESENTS...

LEFT of the DIAL



The Dead Boys Live! At CBGB 1977 DVD

(Music Video Distributors)

Early on in the gig that's documented in the new Dead Boys' DVD *Live! At CBGB 1977*, the band's rodent-faced singer, Stiv Bators, blows his nose into a piece of bologna and proceeds to gleefully gulp down the tainted luncheon meat with one swallow. On first viewing of the incident, I couldn't help but think, "I bet that was the only thing Stiv had to eat that day." While Bators' disgusting display will immediately set the band's fans apart from its detractors, it is a pretty good analogy for what The Dead Boys were all about. The band presented an ethos of juvenilia and aggression and a so-stupid-it's-clever image well described by the title of their debut album *Young, Loud and Snotty*. The Dead Boys emerged from the same Cleveland stomping grounds that created art-punk experimentalists Pere Ubu (guitarist Cheetah Chrome and drummer Johnny Blitz were both members of Pere Ubu's early incarnation Rocket From the Tombs), but abandoned that group's art rock leanings in favor of a sound and style that was far more direct. Cleveland's finest punks, The Dead Boys have always been overshadowed by their more widely recognized counterparts in New York City. Even though the group went on to become a large and notable part of the original group of NYC Punk scene (ala Ramones, Television and Richard Hell), The Dead Boys have never fully received their just rewards. And what is their "just rewards" you may ask ... well, how about an illuminating and well-presented visual document of the band in its prime for starters? That's what viewers are presented with here. Over the course of 45 minutes and ten songs, The Dead Boys run through some of their best material with an intensity and abandon that's palpable. Performing nihilist anthems like "Sonic Reducer," "Ain't Nothing to Do" and The Stooges' "Search and Destroy," what's most amazing about the band's presentation is how tight and good it is. While punk rock is still widely considered to be anti-musical, The Dead Boys' performance proves that such a band could be musically disciplined without losing its dangerous edge. Bators falls over himself continuously, convulses on the stage floor and regularly threatens to impale himself on his own mic stand, yet never misses a musical cue. Similarly, guitarists Chrome and Jimmy Zero rip out frantic rhythms and leads without so much as breaking a sweat or losing a sneer. Another compelling factor that the viewer becomes aware of is the fact that this event took place over 25 years ago. While many of the current wave of prepackaged punk bands jump around the stage and turn their amps up to full volume, none of them do it with the same conviction and believability as seen in this performance. Most film footage of early punk bands consists of shaky hand-held footage, single camera angles and dreadful sound. By comparison, *Live! At CBGB 1977* is professionally shot and recorded, contains a full-length concert from the legendary band and some decent extras to boot (including period interviews with the band and modern reminiscences from Chrome and band manager/CBGB owner Hilly Kristal). This is an essential document for anyone interested in punk's origins or rock films. Finally, justice is served.

—mark norris



Soundtrack The SpongeBob Square Pants Movie: Music From the Movie and More (Sire Nick Records)

Who lives in a pineapple under the sea? If you're reading this review you probably already know the answer. It's the omni-present, universally-licensed media presence known as SpongeBob SquarePants, who seems to be well on his way to dethroning Mickey Mouse as America's favorite animated icon. The all-engulfing cartoon character looks bent on world domination with that winsome buck-toothed smile and a q-rating through the roof. OK, I'll confess: I am a Spongebob fan. I didn't, however, expect much from the soundtrack that accompanies his big screen debut. Usually these pointless cash-ins are just part of the multi-platform fodder meant to launch such all-points projects from massive media conglomerates. Sure, this is all part of AOL/Time Warner's evil plot, but this record is indeed thoughtful and fun. It's an almost perfect soundtrack. This collection of original songs features performances by SpongeBob (Tom Kenny) and Patrick Star (Bill Fagerbakke) alongside tracks that directly tie into the movie's plot from some indie and alt-rock royalty, a legendary speed-maddened British hard rock outfit and um... Avril Lavigne. Well, almost perfect, but you shouldn't let the screamie warble on "SpongeBob Squarepants Theme" courtesy of Canada's pop-punk poseur princess ruin an otherwise cool and delightful affair. The SpongeBob-sung "Best Day Ever" is an A-list wonder and very effective stab at Beach Boys beauty, unsurprisingly produced and co-written by Brian Wilson collaborator Andy Paley. Wilco lends the rhythmic new wave raver "Just A Kid" and The Shins prove their acoustic pop patent with "They'll Soon Discover." Lemmy Kilmister and Motorhead pound through an abusive retooling of their classic "You Better Run" as "You Better Swim." The soundtrack's one thorough disappointment, besides Avril, is the lack of inclusion of the skin-flinted crustacean and Krusty Krab proprietor Mr. Krabs. The going price of fresh ocean crab probably ain't cheap and we wouldn't expect Eugene Krabs to just give it away.

—donny kutzbach