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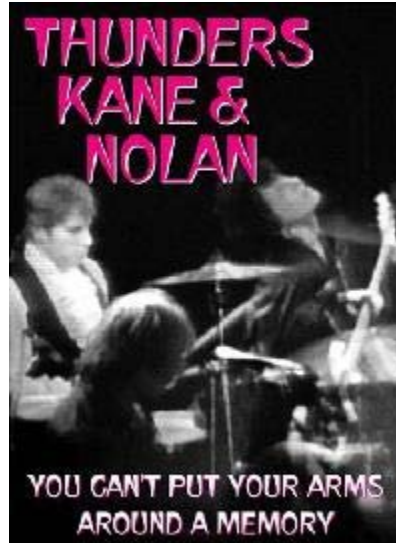
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Thunders, Kane & Nolan

You Can't Put Your Arms Around A Memory

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The legendary New York Dolls may have had their official reunion in 2004 (thank you, Morrissey) but on January 4, 1987 Johnny Thunders, Arthur "Killer" Kane and Jerry Nolan came together to play one show. "You Can't Put Your Arms Around A Memory" captures this performance for those of us who couldn't be there.

Let's get this out of the way right away: "You Can't Put Your Arms Around A Memory" is not high quality by today's standards. The whole thing was shot from one camera, and it generally focuses on Johnny Thunders. That being said, both video and audio are well above acceptable quality. The crowd is packed in to see Thunders and company, and gets more excited as the ninety minute concert progresses.

Although known for his indulgence in heroin and abusing the crowd, Johnny Thunders is in fine form on "You Can't Put Your Arms Around A Memory" and seems to enjoy bantering with the crowd in a non-confrontational style. The band rips through New York Dolls songs, hits a few Heartbreakers highlights, and throws in a few covers. In true New York Dolls style covers of "Pipeline" and "Green Onions" become entirely new songs as the band makes them their own.

The high point of this DVD for me was when the band leaves and Mr. Thunders picks up an acoustic guitar. For five songs Johnny plays solo, and the crowd seems to love it. From the Dolls' "Lonely Planet Boy" to Johnny's biggest post NYD hit "You Can't Put Your Arms Around A Memory" the crowd sings along and the excitement builds. Thunder's cover of "Eve of DCaestruction" is all too prophetic, and is all the more moving with his trademark off key vocal.

Sadly, this is the last time Thunders, Kane and Nolan would ever share a stage. In 1991 Johnny Thunders left this world. A year later Jerry Nolan would follow. Both deaths were related to their long time drug habits. Arther "Killer" Kane survived to see the New York Dolls reunion in 2004, but was taken by leukemia shortly after. He never saw the following tours David Johansen and Sylvain Sylvain have performed under the New York Dolls name since. "You Can't Put Your Arms Around A Memory" feels like a fond goodbye to old friends. It's hard not to feel a bit of sadness when Johnny sings "Lonely Planet Boy", and triumphant to see the band called back out for a well earned encore. As the first generation of punk passes away it's comforting to have releases like "You Can't Put Your Arms Around A Memory" to remember the glory that was, and to revisit like a long lost friend.

Reviewed by: **Jim McDonald**

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