



THUNDERS, KANE, & NOLAN YOU CAN'T PUT YOUR ARMS AROUND A MEMORY MVD

On January 4th, 1987, three-fifths of the seminal glam band the New York Dolls played a one-off gig at the Roxy in L.A. Who cares? Well, admittedly very few, but for those that do, there's a new DVD, *You Can't Put Your Arms Around A Memory*, marking the final time Johnny Thunders, Jerry Nolan, and Arthur Kane performed together.

The Dolls are a key link in the rock-n-roll chain that leads up to punk, and Thunders & Nolan influenced s'more of the kids with the even more stripped-down Heartbreakers, but by the time of this concert all three had been drifting for a number of years. The reunion only happened because Kane—whos post-Dolls free-fall was brought to light in the recent documentary, *New York Doll*—received a surprise phone call from Thunders, asking if he'd be up for the gig.

Despite the unique circumstances surrounding the event, it's obvious from the get-go that this is still Thunders' show. He comes out strutting for his signature opener, "Pipeline," wiping through those innovative leads that have defined the Thunders' sound. He sings all the songs here, a typical set that includes Dolls, Heartbreakers, and solo tracks, plus numerous cover tunes. He appears to be in good shape too, energetically working the stage. But Thunders was a notorious junkie, and after playing a few acoustic numbers by his lonesome, pulls one of his famous disappearing acts. When he finally returns he is obviously worse off than just a moment before, barely playing his guitar and even falling to the stage floor a couple of times. For some, this is the Thunders they paid to see, and the man himself was keenly aware of his own myth, occasionally faking an on-stage intoxication, just to please the morbid. That doesn't appear to be the case here. The rest of the band (which includes an unidentified second guitarist) is in fine form, though, and the foursome produces that ideal loose-n-sloppy rock-n-roll noise that is so synonymous with Johnny Thunders and the New York Dolls. For a while, anyway.

In just a few short years, Thunders and Nolan would be dead, while Kane survived long enough to participate in the formal New York Dolls reunion with Sylvain Sylvain and David Johansen, before suddenly passing away after just one show in 2004.

The Thunders, Kane & Nolan performance released here for the first time, was recorded with a single, steady camera, and while it looks and sounds good for what it is, it is still difficult to watch thorough an unblinking eye for ninety minutes without zoning out now and then. Actually, one wishes the taper would drop the camera or something, simply to stir things up. Which brings to mind one of the reasons the Dolls and Heartbreakers were

considered such a breath of fresh air at the time and are still revered to this day: technical ability alone is just plain boring.

--Bart Bealmear

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