

**DEVO**  
**DEVO LIVE 1980** (TARGET VIDEO)



"It was a dark time. The American President, Ronald Reagan, a former actor in motion picture entertainment, presided over the land," reads the text. It recedes into the screen *Star Wars*-style to set the scene and we're transported back to "August 17, 1980.

Planet Earth. The United States of America." It was a time when five self-ascribed spuds from the "industrial wasteland" of Akron, Ohio, had just released what would become their highest-placing album, *Freedom of Choice*.

*Devo Live 1980* is a rarity in that it captures a full-length show from a band at its peak, rather than piecing together scattered footage to show quality versions of every song. It's the closest you can come to experiencing the early excitement of Devo live and in the flesh.

Onstage, they look like nerds possessed. Mark Mothersbaugh is the rail-thin, spectacled math teacher you would've pelted with spit wads the moment he turned his back. And in a strange way, Devo is teaching, but it's not math they're interested in. They're on a mission to spread the theory of de-evolution—the maxim that holds that mankind is actually de-evolving, becoming a herd of robotic, corporate clones, each one indistinguishable from the next—to anyone whose mind is ready. They work the stage like machines, dressed alike, their motions jerky and erratic.

Though the audio is merely adequate, the picture is sharp and vivid. Camera angles shift at all the right moments, capturing the entire band, sweaty and determined. The audience, curiously, is never featured, leaving you to wonder how, exactly, people reacted to the whole mind-expanding experience.

The stage show is as simplistic as much of the music—and that's a good thing. Light beams pulse on and off behind the band. They play just over 20 songs, two of the high points being stunning versions of "Uncontrollable Urge" and "Gut Feeling."

For Devo fans, it's essential viewing, either a reminder of the times or a glimpse at what we missed. Non-enthusiasts should be forced to watch as well, and if they aren't impressed, at least they'll see how much more there is to this band than "Whip It." | **Daniel O'Malley**

**THE HUMAN LEAGUE**  
**LIVE AT THE DOME** (SECRET FILMS)



Electronic music will never die only because of its proper start. The Human League established that during the late '70s in Sheffield, as the dark and avant-garde cooperative composing songs about silkworms and giants. They threw a curveball to the rest of the northern England steel town by parting ways with the original set of sound suppliers behind the lore and hiring on a couple of girls who just happened to be out clubbing. Philip Oakey wanted to be part of the next Abba; with the help of Joanne Catherall and Susan Anne Sulley, they weren't Abba—they were their own effigy.

*Live at the Dome* captures the last show of the Human League's 2003 world tour. The timing was right for the trio as they loaded up the renowned Brighton Dome. Sulley (the blond) had plenty of practice simply being vampy; Catherall (the brunette), although slightly more reserved, displayed her usual girl-next-door splendor. Oakey's (the buzz cut) stage presence seemed a little more relaxed than normal. He has the stage persona of a party host, covering all the stage by walking very rapidly from one side to the other. He's appeared even more comfortable when performing songs from the latest record, *Secrets*. Oakey is at his best during "Empire State Human," where he—*gasp*—dances. The moves are childlike but the idea is to grow up to be "tall tall tall, as big as a wall wall wall." His smile is the sparkle on the polished chrome of a trademark Human League performance.

Producer and director Dave Meehan churned out a very clean and crisp view of the band. The many cameras scattered throughout the venue became a little monotonous in places, but the result was more ostentatious than irregular. The major bonus lies in the DVD's features, which includes a full interview with the trio along with an extensive look behind the scenes throughout their world tour (including footage of University City's Pageant—albeit brief and unpopulated, sadly). Clearly, *Live at the Dome* isn't for casual fans or even someone wanting to revisit the wistfulness of the '80s. It's a nice token to the followers but, alas—anyone else won't appreciate it as much. | **Cory Hoehn**

## COVERS THAT SHOULD HAVE STAYED HIDDEN

By Shandy Casteel

Soundtrack albums have become the biggest culprits in paring pretty good songs with really bad artists, but they can't take all the blame. Other lapses come in the form of tributes or entire cover albums artists feel inspired and ordained to unleash upon us. If you haven't heard these travesties, feel blessed; you're better for it. Anything involving William Shatner was automatically disqualified, simply because he would have filled the entire list himself.

- Duran Duran | "911 Is a Joke"**  
A piece of musical homicide of unequalled cruelty. Shame on you, Simon.
- Limp Bizkit | "Behind Blue Eyes"**  
As bad as their cover of "Faith" was, it only got worse.
- 311 | "Love Song"**  
Did we mention this is by 311?
- The Scissor Sisters | "Comfortably Numb"**  
Floyd and disco just don't mix, no matter how many mushrooms you eat.
- Sheryl Crow | "Sweet Child O' Mine"**  
Tour de Awful.
- AFI | "Head Like a Hole"**  
For all the goth/industrial posturing, it's more like a canned meat product.
- Madonna | "American Pie"**  
We're still waiting for an apology on this one.
- Jessica Simpson | "Take My Breath Away"**  
Really a three-for special with the addition of "These Boots Were Made for Walking" and "Angels." Even Robbie Williams deserves better.
- My Chemical Romance/The Used | "Under Pressure"**  
Apparently not enough suffering was inflicted upon this song by Vanilla Ice.
- Zwan | "Don't Let Me Down"**  
Billy and the gang did this live but, thanks to the Internet, everyone can enjoy the shamefulness.

