

God Save the Queen: A Punk Rock Anthology

Contributed by Brent Simon

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Performances from punk rock legends Buzzcocks, Iggy & The Stooges, Johnny Thunder, Generation X, Dead Boys, UK Subs and more headline *God Save the Queen: A Punk Rock Anthology*. A vast-spanning collection of noisy numbers designed to shake your stereo system and piss off your neighbors, this so-so concert compilation will enthrall hardcore genre fanatics, but leave those on the fringe – even the more sympathetic music fans desperately wanting to rock out – more than a bit disappointed.

The breadth of material here is fairly impressive, in that the disc digs deeper into the genre to highlight some of the lesser known bands, like GBH, 999, Subhumans and UK Subs. The flipside of

this is that one occasionally gets the feeling *God Save the Queen* is more about what the distributor could reasonably and cheaply license than the comprehensiveness its title might otherwise tantalizingly suggest. Ergo, there are no performances from the Sex Pistols or the Ramones, which seems downright criminal. While there *is* a two-minute clip of Marky Ramone talking about joining the latter band three years on (“I Wanna Be Sedated” was the first track he recorded with them), it’s just not the same thing as live action. It leaves you wanting more; it highlights the absence of their necessary inclusion.

Of the 20 tracks included here, Iggy & The Stooge’s “I Wanna Be Your Dog” is, of course, a highlight, and thankfully Iggy Pop doesn’t cut himself up with a broken bottle. A vintage cut from the Buzzcocks, “Boredom,” is energetic and well received, but paradoxically not as charged as much of their later material. Johnny Thunders’ “Born To Lose,” meanwhile, displays a nice focus on melody, though an ensuing interview showcases amusingly tart and abbreviated answers about modern-day audience reaction (“Yeah, the kids are all right”) and his attempts at establishing sobriety; kudos to the unseen interviewer for coaxing some relevance out of a most unwilling subject. A post-show interview with a chatty Billy Idol and guitarist Bob Andrews frames Generation X’s “Your Generation,” though the original version of “Dancing With Myself,” recorded for 1981’s *Kiss Me Deadly*, might have been a more interesting inclusion. Rounding out things are Blitz’s “New Age,” Goldblade’s “Black Sheep Radical” and Sham 69’s “Tell Us the Truth.”

Presented in full screen with 5.1 surround sound, *God Save the Queen: A Punk Rock Anthology* is adequate sonically, but its video presentation is – arguably in keeping with the material – somewhat raw and grainy, owing to the many disparate sources. Clocking in at just over 70 minutes, it’s substantial enough in length, but the lack of any additional sort of related extras – be it additional interview footage, commentary or even just text biographies – pigeonhole this release as far too narrow-minded for general audiences. **C (Show) D+ (Disc)**

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