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Posted on Fri, Jan. 20, 2006

Punk rock, hot jam band

By Ricky Flake

"God Save The Queen: A Punk Rock Anthology," Various Artists (Music Video Distributors,

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This DVD, which features neither the Ramones nor the Sex Pistols (though the cover art owes a lot to the latter band), will be released stateside on Tuesday.

There's a brief segment of Marky talking about the Ramones' impact on the mid-1970s NYC scene, but the majority of this DVD presentation is performance clips (sometimes with oddly synched audio) featuring the cream of the scene that arose in the brudders' wake a few years later.

Highlights include Johnny Thunders' "Born to Lose," Dead Boys' "Sonic Reducer," UK Subs' "CID," Iggy & the Stooges' "Now I Wanna Be Your Dog" and Generation X's "Your Generation."

Nearly everything here comes from elsewhere (the Stooges' clip is from "Live in Detroit," reviewed last year), but it's good to get it in compilation form. Ask at your local video/music outlet or visit www.dvdnote.com.

"Elko," Railroad Earth (SCI Fidelity Records,

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Driven by Todd Sheaffer's songs, which start with bluegrass tradition, Railroad Earth explores musical idioms including Celtic, rock, country and folk, delivering an original sound.

The band's loyal fan base began with superlative word-of-mouth from their first shows in 2001. Recorded during their 2005 spring tour, this 1/24 double disc captures the timeless qualities and unpredictable nature of a Railroad Earth concert. They're a top flight jam band, as befits the SCI Fidelity paradigm.

Sheaffer's lead vocals/acoustic guitar, Tim Carbone's violin/vocals, John Skehan's mandolin/vocals, Johnny Grubb's upright bass, Carey Harmon's drums/percussion/vocals, and multi-instrumentalist Andy Goessling frame the songs in often-enchanting settings.

My disc one favorites are the pathos-ridden "Bird In A House," the sprightly flute passages of "The Hunting Song" and the tour de force called "Head."

The title song leads off disc two, featuring nifty interplay between fiddle, mandolin and guitars. In fact, the highlight of both discs is the great instrumental interplay between the RR Earth members. The shortest songs on both discs are approximately six minutes long, and there are several in the 15 to 16 minute ballpark.

It takes superb musicianship to keep long songs interesting, and Railroad Earth does a great job. Snag this jam fan's dream at local stores, or visit www.railroadearth.com to order.

Ricky Flake is a former punk rocker, working musician (he sings with South Mississippi's Tribute to the Ramones, COMMANDOS, and drums with the Deacons) and music fan who lives in Biloxi. Reach him at lobotomy3857@wmconnect.com.

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