

REWIND — REISSUES AND BEST-OFs

BUZZCOCKS

Live at the Shepherds Bush Empire 2003 DVD
(Secret Films/Music Video Distributors)

★★★ 1/2

This Buzzcocks 2003 live DVD avoids the insincere, institutionalized nostalgia that plagued the Sex Pistols' reunion tour. These punk legends aren't here to cash in or regain some lost glory days of youth — they come off like they're still performing this music because they can't stop themselves. It's startling how effortlessly these guys crank out such intense, emotive energy and how the music appears to be an essential component of their identities. The Buzzcocks' authen-

tic timelessness is also sustained by Pete Shelley's unusual lyrical wit and thoughtful observations on relationships and the human condition, mature far beyond his youthful 1970s years.

By the time this concert was filmed, the Buzzcocks core of Pete Shelley and Steve Diggle had actually been reunited and operating under relative commercial obscurity for well over a decade. Backed by a rhythm section of Tony Barber and Philip Barker, Shelley and Diggle here sound every bit as sharp, driven and tight as in their heyday. Shelley's

voice in particular has held up fabulously — sounding seasoned while still preserving its full versatility and range. The DVD crams in 32 songs spanning the Buzzcocks' earliest recordings through 2003's self-titled album of solid, new material. The set list is reasonably definitive, though one of its few glaring absences is "Everybody's Happy Nowadays." For either the dedicated fan or the newbie just now investigating the legendary band, this DVD provides a thorough overview of the group's career with consistently brilliant new performances.

— Michael David Toth

