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Buzzcocks: Live At Shepherds Bush Empire 2003



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Punk Rock should be the province of the young; a perpetually renewed sweat-glazed hormonal torrent of emotion and weirdness and rebellion speaking up and acting out with dentist drill guitars and jackhammer drums and the keening, snotty voice of a singer who mumbles and yawns his way through songs as perfectly explosive as split atoms. So why is it that only people over 30 seem to give a damn about Punk? Has Punk passed its cultural moment? Has the fact that corporate America has sunk its teeth deep into this once thrashing dangerous beast and supped upon its fiery blood, thereby co-opting it and tragically, almost laughably turning Iggy Pop into a spokesman for cruise ship family vacation packages and using the saw blade sharp twin guitar fusillade of **The Buzzcocks** to underscore the hardcore rebelliousness of driving an SUV, finally rendered Punk pointless?

I don't doubt that there are still some kids out there who are right at this very moment dropping the stylus on Marquee Moon or Rocket to Russia or Damned Damned Damned for the first time and experiencing that purely exquisite cherry-popping blast of white heat bursting from the speakers and blowing open vast new vistas. Every virginal ear bent to these first wave Punk records is met with the promise of the new. But mostly what I see is a bunch of 30 and overs buying Punk records, talking about Punk, and attempting to live an aesthetically Punky lifestyle i.e. very DIY, politically/communally conscious, etc. The kids wear CBGBs t-shirts yet

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- > Future Retro (New Wave Remix CD)
- > Starz: Back In Action - Live In 2003 (DVD-Video/Concert)
- > A Change Of Seasons (Comedy)
- > Best Of The Electric Company
- > Buzzcocks - Live At Shepherds Bush Empire 2003
- > The Velvet Underground: Velvet Redux Live MCMXCIII (DVD-Video Concert)
- > Beastmaster - Divimax Edition
- > The Sugarcubes - Live Zabor (1989/Long-Form DVD-Video)

have never listened to even one of the bands that put the club on the map. And that's just sad, really.

It leads me to wonder what exactly the target demographic of **Buzzcocks Live At Shepherds Bush Empire 2003** could be. Are there any kids out there that care about The Buzzcocks? This concert, filmed almost 30 years after the group's inception, probably won't convert any new fans. Unfortunately, the audio is substandard which results in the songs sounding an awful lot alike and the vocals are almost completely drowned out. That's a shame because The Buzzcocks were one of the most melodic of the first wave Punk bands. They pretty much invented what is today termed Pop-Punk.


The direction and editing of the show seems to be out of the late-80s hair metal music video playbook. Think Motley Crue but without the delicious cheesiness of the required slo-mo Vince Neil boogaloo.

The best feature of this DVD is the hour-long interview with founding Buzzcocks Pete Shelley and Steve Diggle. Both wear their years pretty well and are quite open and humorously nostalgic about not only the beginnings of their band but also the beginnings of the whole Punk movement. Again I have to wonder if any kids out there will even see this. Or will it simply be older fools like me that continue to care about this sort of thing? I hope not coz that would just be tragic.

- Kristofer Collins

Kristofer Collins is an editor at The New Yinzer and the owner of Desolation Row CDs in Pittsburgh, PA. Visit Desolation Row at www.myspace.com/desolationrowcds for more.

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