



VARIOUS ARTISTS

POP PUNK'S NOT DEAD [GO KART]
[Fans of the Queers and Travoltas take note.]



Go Kart Records isn't really known for boasting an amazing roster, but it's managed to slap together 30 competent bands for this project. *Pop Punk's Not Dead* was created in the hopes of inspiring

new pop-punkers to rally behind a genre with an arguably diminishing fan base. Characterized by simple, catchy, mostly up-tempo melodic punk, there are quite a few strong songs present. Some noteworthy tracks include "Definitely" by the Queers, "Change" by Guff, "Amy" by River City High, and "Seven" by the Unknown, a song that sounds reminiscent of Limp. Mach Pelican's "Spend My Time" brings an Australian touch to the album, while "Anti Anthem" by Belgium's Janez Detd shows what's going on in the Benelux. Represent! The Dazes somehow prove that the Japanese can have British accents, too, on "You Really Got Me Now." By far the most original band on the comp has to be Travoltas with "Can't Stop." Picture Neil Young playing in a Moog-laden pop-punk band singing about e-mail during the 1950s. It's kinda trippy, but good at the same time.

-derek stark



VOXTROT

S/T [BEGGARS]
[Fans of Ted Leo, Belle & Sebastian, and the Smiths take note.]



While there's nothing immediately as catchy as "The Start of Something" to be found, the key word is *immediately*. In music criticism today, patience is often supplanted by the desire to get a knee-jerk opinion out there

first. Well, this self-titled debut is what we call a grower. It's not long into "Introduction" that you'll notice the continued prominence of strings last heard on the *Your Biggest Fan* EP, released in 2006. The most stunning departure from the band's three previous EPs is the piano ballad "Real Live Version," where vocalist Ramesh Srivastava comes off almost McCartney-like. Sure, "Steven" has the same bouncy-pop feel fans are used to and "The Future, Part 1" and "Every Day" does justice for all those Morrissey comparisons, but it's clear that Srivastava is looking for his own distinctive niche as a songwriter. "I had to lose my idols to find my voice," sings Srivastava on the manic "Brother In Conflict." This is the sound of a band progressing beyond the hype, and beyond its comfort zone. *Vox Trot* may not be a blogger's flavor of the week this time around, but rather a flavor for all 52 of them.

-D.J. Short

eye candy



DINOSAUR JR.

LIVE IN THE MIDDLE EAST DVD [IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT]

This DVD is simply astounding. My jaw literally dropped while I sat transfixed, the incredible sounds and images flooding my mind with a rhythmic ecstasy bordering on the level of religious experience. Music is god, and Dinosaur Jr. has rediscovered nirvana. If you are not familiar with Dinosaur or Dinosaur Jr., now is the time for your enlightenment. Nothing is perfect, but everything in this product comes pretty damn close; the camera work, the editing, the sound quality, the lighting, and even the crowd reactions are ideal.

Why this item's title references the Middle East is unclear, but you, the viewer, get to stand onstage - via the multiple, wide-angle cameras - as the band conjures resonating, high-gain, beautiful noise that can be described as soulful, psychedelic hardcore interspersed with mournful blues and detonating dissonance. People make entire careers pretending to feel this way, while band members J Mascis, Murph, and Lou Barlow generate the real deal and take it all to another echelon. This is as close to replicating a live concert as a film can get.

Directed by Phillip Virus (J Mascis' brother-in-law), the DVD features 18 live songs, a behind-the-scenes documentary, and on-camera commentary from Sonic Youth's Kim Gordon and Thurston Moore. Big-shot Hollywood actor Matt Dillon is also a big fan, so he gets some camera time and puts his two cents in as well. At the time of this writing, the pre-orders are being taken for only \$13.99, so this is one hell of a deal. If you missed the grunge-metal movement during the late '80s and early '90s, pick up on the heavy fuzz that faded from popularity, but never went away.

-Marcus Solomon

NINE INCH NAILS

LIVE: BESIDE YOU IN TIME DVD [NOTHING/INTERSCOPE]

Say what you want about Trent Reznor, but give the man props for fully embracing technology with every release. *Live: Beside You In Time* captures the "Live: With_Teeth 2006" tour in standard DVD, HD DVD, and Blu-ray DVD with stereo and 5.1 Surround audio options across all formats. You can even turn on the lyrics to easily sing along. As with NIN's previous DVD *And All That Could Have Been* (2002), Reznor also includes built-in audio/video calibration tools so fans can optimize their set-ups and enjoy the at-home concert experience exactly as he intended. This attention to detail is as rare as quality concert DVDs nowadays - very. When a band tours, a corresponding DVD is practically a



given, and too often an unnecessary snooze-fest. What happened to documenting a live performance because it was special, or producing something with originality?

NIN's last DVD was phenomenal across the board. Filming every tour stop on MiniDV from multiple crowd and stage perspectives, Reznor and his team assembled, edited, and mixed a definitive document of the "Fragility 2.0" summer 2000 concert experience. *Live: Beside You in Time* feels somewhat repetitive. This time, only two shows were filmed, director Rob Sheridan returns, and a new - but awesome - variation on the color-changing LED screen fragments accompanies the *With_Teeth*-heavy set list. The expected instrumental transition to Reznor's softer side features "Eraser," "Right Where It Belongs," and "Beside You in Time" against film clips ranging from monkey fights and X-ray vision to mangled war victims and a digital snowstorm, providing the set highlight. An alternate angle option of the full-stage view allows one to watch the uninterrupted films in context.

The considerable bonus material includes five songs from NIN's summer amphitheatre tour (with completely different lighting), among them the previously unreleased "Non-Entity" and a better version of "Closer." Music videos for "The Hand That Feeds" and "Only," and three live songs from 2005 rehearsals round out a release that's not essential, but certainly makes for quality viewing.

-Natasha Padilla

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APPETITE FOR DECONSTRUCTION: A PUNK ROCKUMENTARY DVD [MVD]

During the summers of 2004 and 2005, promoter David Pollack launched what he hoped would be a party. In an obvious nod to the Warped Tour's success in North America, Pollack's Deconstruction Tour was just as ambitious; carting a slew of punk/hardcore bands around Europe with numerous motocross, BMX, and skateboard pros in tow. As one would imagine, *Appetite for Deconstruction* documents, *urr, rockuments* a variety of the festival's aspects and festivities, right? Right.

Weighing in at 160-plus minutes, we're privy to bands kissing Pollack's ass (he gets wasted a lot and breaks stuff - an ideology that seems to spread to Pennywise by the end of it all), a solid lineup of music, and the occasional face-smashing through a kicker ramp. While the video shares 27 performances from 21 bands, you can't complain about the quality (unless you're the sound guy from the Mad Caddies - it's funny watching him trash his own performance). I've seen most of these bands live before and honestly think this DVD pulls their sounds off quite well.

Between learning about the "speakeasy" set up by the Slackers to continually keep the tour "wet" and the antics of Boy Sets Fire and From Autumn to Ashes, classic punk bands like Pennywise ("The World," "Something to Change," and "Bro Hymn"), Lagwagon ("Violins" and "Falling Apart"), Anti-Flag ("Turncoat"), and Pulley ("Insects Destroy") rock and talk their way through the film. MxPx ("The Next Big Thing") and Tribute to Nothing ("Breaking Your Fall") also impress with their offerings. But above all, the best performance on this entertaining rockumentary clearly goes to Strike Anywhere's two songs, "Amplified the Blaze" and "To the World." It's worth the money. They're good.

-derek stark

