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THURSDAY, JANUARY 07, 2010

## X-Ray Spex - Live at the Roundhouse, London 2008 CD / DVD Review



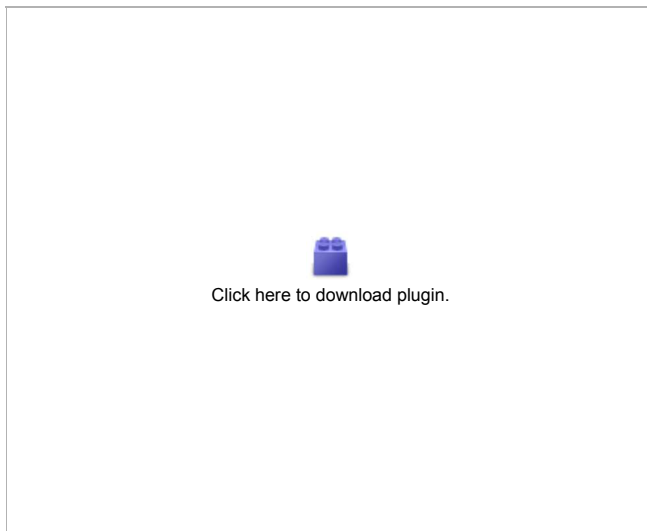
After a 13 year hiatus, X-Ray Spex reunited for a single show at the Roundhouse, London on Sept. 6, 2008 and this show was released last month by Year Zero on CD and DVD.

Unlike some of the "we're only in it for the money" reunions, X-Ray Spex are in great form. The twenty-track set includes almost the entirety of *Germ Free Adolescents* ("Plastic Bag" is the only track not played) and Poly Styrene's voice has held up exceptionally well given that *Germ Free Adolescents* was released thirty years ago. Other songs include three tracks from X-Ray Spex's 2005 reunion *Conscious Consumer* along with one new and previously unreleased track "Bloody War".

In addition to Styrene's frenetic vocals holding strong, the band sounds in top shape. Unlike the 1995 reunion, the lineup for this show is more of a 'pick-up' version of X-Ray Spex with bassist Paul Dean as the only hold-over. The line-up for this show includes Sid Truelove (Rubella Ballet, Flux of Pink Indians), Gt. Saxby (Arnold, Poptones) and Flash (Rip Rig & Panic, Jah Wobble, Don Cherry and The Slits). In comparison to some of the quasi-legitimate (bootleg?) X-Ray Spex CDs that I bought in the 90s, the band's performance this night is phenomenal. This the first show that I've heard where Polly sings with an air of (self-) confidence and the tightness and competence of the band adds to the overall performance. Flash adds some great sax riffs throughout the show so, while Laura Logic is missed, Flash is able to successfully fill the gap.

In what was a pretty daring move, the band opens with their best known song "Oh Bondage Up Yours". This gamble paid off and you can watch the crowd pogoing and singing along for the entirety of the set. The band only slows down when they hit the tracks from *Conscious Consumer* but this doesn't seem to deter the crowd or throw off the set as songs like "Crystal Clear" are hypnotically melodic. For the encore, X-Ray Spex closes with a second, faster version of "Oh Bondage Up Yours" which Polly sings with her daughter and grand-daughter.

This disc is a great addition to X-Ray Spex catalog and let's hope that the band doesn't take another 12 years before releasing their next disc.



### Links:

X-Ray Spex  
Photos from X-Ray Spex at CBGB (from CBGB's Shine)

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