

Roctober

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X-Ray Spex "Live @ the Roundhouse London 2008 CD/DVD (YearZero)



So basically the main reason to watch/hear this is to find out if Poly Styrene still has her mojo. I can think of only two releases in the last few decades (an early 80s solo record with songwriting more subdued and jazzy -- perhaps because of a Hare Krishna mellowing -- and an under appreciated X-Ray Spex mid-90s reunion record),

but basically if you've recorded what stands as just about the best punk single ("Oh Bondage") and the best punk LP ever recorded, what do you have to prove? Well, I guess if you're over 50, possibly you have to prove that your appeal was more than being be adorable, raw, spunky, and perfectly imperfect -- attributes that a cynic might attribute to her youth during her band's Germ Free Adolescence. Unfortunately, we'll never know if Styrene's magnetism and ability to project joy even when relating genuine outrage can be separated from her adorableness, because on this live DVD/CD is is just as cute and fun and raw and stylish and beautiful to the core as she was as a teen in braces. This is more impressive considering that the band is a bit too slick at times ("I Am A Cliche" has a little too much driving Pro Rock behind it) and that they are in a posh concert hall with a full lightshow, bouquets of disco balls, and a massive futuristic globe-shaped video screen over the stage showing vintage Poly imagery during the concert. But none of this takes away from Styrene's great performance, and the true testament to this is that unlike the aging rockers who fill most reunion show crowds, this crowd includes droves with teenage punk girls in ecstasy.

Posted by Roctober Magazine Reviews: at 11:42 AM

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