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SCUZZY GARAGE ROCK 'N' ROLL

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TV PARTY - X



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**X-RAY SPEX - Live At The Roundhouse London 2008** {*Future Noise* (<http://www.futurenoisemusic.com/>)} Apparently, this live show was the first time X-RAY SPEX had performed live since 1979. The band should need no introduction as, in Poly Styrene, it had one of the most recognisable figures and voices of the entire 70s UK Punk movement. This neat package captures the reformation show both on CD and DVD.

Once famed for day-glo attire, Poly today looks a different proposition. Here she has long hair, dressed in black with pink trim and looking rather buxom with it. Initially she looks, and to a lesser degree sounds, rather inhibited, but six songs in 'Let's Submerge' sees her appearing more relaxed and animated.

The set obviously draws on all the classic songs with highlights being 'I Live Off You', a set-closing 'The Day The World Turned Day-Glo' and a simply sublime 'Germ Free Adolescents' that sees Styrene's voice hitting those high notes effortlessly. Oddly, 'I Am A Cliche' is the low point coming over as pedestrian and tame. It was good to see that 1995's 'Conscious Consumer' album was not overlooked with the inclusion of 'Junk Food Junkie', 'Cigarettes', 'Melancholy' and a haunting 'Crystal Clear'. Most enticing though is a brand new track entitled 'Bloody War'. 'Oh Bondage Up Yours!' starts the show off and also provides the finale as Styrene is joined on stage by her daughter, Celeste (who is a deadringer for her Mum - visually and vocally), and RUBELLA BALLET's Zillah Minx.

The sound is crystal clear throughout and filmed on multi cameras. There's not too much in the way of camera effects, just a little bit of layering and some slow motion. The actual lighting at the show featured a revolving globe as the back drop which was continually changing coupled with generally austere lighting.

It's a slick looking product too, coming on like a cross between a CD digipack and a box set. The enclosed booklet features all the lyrics and a few excellent fragments of Poly's own Diary of the 70s mixed up with a few photos.

The negative for me is the fact that this comes over as very much 'Poly Styrene and a be-suited backing band'. It is only when the final credits roll we get to see who else helps make up X-RAY SPEX in 2008. The band members are not mentioned anywhere on the packaging and, if it were only session musos helping out Styrene that would be fine, but this line-up does include the band's original bassist, Paul Dean.

This makes a nice item for the fan to have and the care that has gone into the packaging is plain to see, but for anyone curious of the wondrous sounds of prime time X-RAY SPEX, go check out the 'Germ Free Adolescents' album before hitting this. (14.08.10)

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