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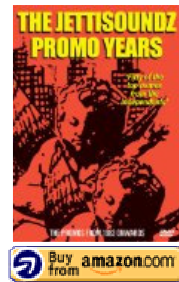
Review by [Kurt Dahlke](#) | posted April 9, 2012 | [E-mail the Author](#)

The Jettisoundz Promo Years:

I keep picking up these discs that I feel I'm not qualified to review. It's the same problem I have when I sing Karaoke, picking songs I have no business trying to sing. In both cases it's like I've got something to prove, which I hope to cover - barely - by saying I picked up this disc for a video by The Jazz Butcher. Liking The Jazz Butcher ought to be enough to get me over in reviewing this massive selection of songs, right? (It's over-three-hours-worth of music videos - considered in retrospect as 'promos' by Jettisoundz production company impresario John Bentham.) Covering the ragged edges of Independent Music in the 1980s, *The Promo Years* features 50 shaggy videos from obscure bands. It's a dizzying trip in time that will have you laughing and crying as you do the move with the quirky jerk.

No, The Cars aren't on this comp. Here's the list of artists and songs:

- 1 One Way System 'Cum On Feel The Noize'
- 2 Hawkwind 'Night of the Hawk'
- 3 Ligotage 'Vanity'
- 4 Jazz Butcher 'Meets Count Dracula'
- 5 Crazy Tim & Sid 'Goin' Bowling'
- 6 Inca Babies 'Jerico'
- 7 Toy Dolls 'Nellie The Elephant'
- 8 Roy Harper & Jimmy Page 'Advertisement'
- 9 Inner City Unit 'Help Sharks'
- 10 Turnpike Cruisers 'That Girls Got Mine'
- 11 Way Out West 'Way Out West'
- 12 Action Pact 'Johnny Fontaine'
- 13 Riverside Trio 'Who's That Knockin'
- 14 Robyn Hitchcock 'America'
- 15 Inner City Unit 'Blood & Bone'
- 16 Tygers of Pan Tang 'Waiting'
- 17 Hawkwind 'Needlegun'
- 18 Cherry Bombz 'Hot Girls In Love'
- 19 Raunch Hands 'Black Jack'
- 20 Dancing Hoods 'This Is Pleasure'
- 21 Crumbsuckers 'Trapped'
- 22 Turnpike Cruisers 'Extra Flesh'
- 23 Macc Lads 'Eh Up!'
- 24 Guana Batz 'Shake Your Money Maker'
- 25 Toy Dolls 'Geordies Gone To Jail'
- 26 Alien Sex Fiend 'Buggin Me'
- 27 Alien Sex Fiend 'Ignore the Machine'
- 28 Michelle Shocked '5am In Amsterdam'
- 29 Exploited 'Sexual Favours'
- 30 Frenzy 'Clockwork Toy'
- 31 Meteors 'Go Buddy Go'
- 32 Bad Karma Beckons 'Six Brides for Jerry Lee'
- 33 Turnpike Cruisers 'Eddie's Ghost'
- 34 Meteors 'Rawhide'
- 35 2-Kut 'Rock That'
- 36 Psychic TV 'Joy'



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- 46 K-Klass 'Rhythm is a Mystery'
- 47 Meteors 'Who Do You Love'
- 48 Phantom Creeps 'Head on Backwards'
- 49 Empress of Fur 'Johnny Voodoo'
- 50 One Way System 'Believe Yourself'

You may certainly recognize names like Psychic TV, (maybe?) Robyn Hitchcock or Hawkwind, but for those three there are about 47 others who might not ever have risen above the level achieved by recording a promo video in hopes of making it big. At least, this is an absolutely thrilling grouping of media for aging Gen-X-ers who loved rebellious music, then and now. You hear that? If you can't take the '80s underground in all its gawky glory, this might not be for you.

As a dude who was in high school in the mid-80s, this stuff strikes me as a serious trip. This DVD is Me As a Teenager: lanky, pale, punk hair and deliberately stupid clothing, just wanting to make music and be cool. If that statement resembles *you*, run out and get this for a little late-night cry. You'll see videos that range from junky professionalism to junky DIY aesthetics. (That Jazz Butcher video looks to have been recorded in singer Pat Fish's apartment, with sheets and construction paper taped up as set dressing.) You'll hear music that ranges from Hardcore Punk - The Exploited - to daft, goofy Pub-Rock - see the Macc Lads' version of The Monkees theme. Michelle Shocked makes an appearance, and Alien Sex Fiend reminds us of when Goth Rock was dangerous and fun.

Obviously, the list of songs and styles goes on, and it's pretty much all good for one reason or another. However, true time-capsules like the Crumbsuckers video featuring numerous shots of '80s punks wandering around New York before the sanitation hit, butt up with egalitarian glee against videos composed of idiots goofing around at a carnival. Fairly low production values and bad, ad hoc, shot-on-video-in-the-'80s looking footage aren't the only things one might consider questionable here, though. For instance, Roy Harper and Jimmy Page record an inadvertent PSA advising against mixing millions of dollars and a cocaine habit, (or something) and Hawkwind speaks to the dangers of using a hubcap and duct tape as a stage outfit. But all of these things are pretty fun, too (except Page and Harper, that was just weird) and - for the right crowd (and you know who you are) - these videos capture a feeling of rebellious optimism we aging sots haven't felt in a decade or two. Besides, said videos - wildly ranging in style, but somewhat universally angular and herky-jerky-quirky - all feature pretty good, to great, music. As both a testament to 'the power of rock' (in its many forms) and the vagaries of success in the music industry, this collection of videos will knock your socks off - which you probably aren't wearing anyway, since socks are so uncool.

The DVD

Video:

If you were collecting these videos on VHS when they were first available, your tape - depending on how much you watched it in the day - wouldn't look too much worse than does this DVD. It's not a complaint, mind you. The source video for all of these 4 X 3 productions was pretty much duty-bound to look not all that great from the get go. Yet these somewhat soft, sometimes blown out videos will no longer decay! If The Who wasn't a bloated corporate rock dinosaur by the time these bands were kicking it, I'd be inclined to say "long live rock!"

Sound:

Digital Stereo Audio is of equal archival quality for a time when Sony Walkman cassette players reigned supreme. In other words, audio is no great shakes, but there doesn't seem to be any significant damage to source audio, either. And again, you can play this disc into the ground and it shouldn't ever get any worse.

Extras:

Alas, there are no extras, but what do you want when you get 197 minutes of videos on one disc?

Final Thoughts:

The Jettisoundz Promo Years is a unique historical document of independent underground music in the 1980s. At a time when post-punk was just a twinkle in

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its daddy's eye, these adventurous bands were mashing styles, acting like fools, and dressing oddly. If you've any love for one of the few streams of anti-establishment music available to woeful teens in the '80s - not rap and hip-hop, obviously - but that which more or less sprouted from the fragments of the punk scene, then this massive collection is for you. As invaluable and historically unique as it is, the niche focus of *Promo Years* limits its market a bit, but for that it's still **Highly Recommended**. (Bonus points if you still have a skinny leather tie hiding somewhere in your closet.)

- Kurt Dahlke

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