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Shonen Knife — Live At Mohawk Place 2009

08/24/10 3:08pm

by Jody McCutcheon (CHARTattack)

DVD REVIEW

Company: **Good Charamel**

Rating: **3.5 / 5**





It's one thing to hear Japanese indie darlings Shonen Knife, and entirely another thing to see them. They are,

after all, the band whose show transformed Kurt Cobain "into a hysterical nine-year-old girl at a Beatles concert" (his own words, allegedly). The sight of three diminutive Japanese women on stage, in neon outfits, wielding guitars and drums and a rich pop-punk styled after The Ramones, Buzzcocks, early Clash, etc., is worth the price of admission.

Live At Mohawk Place 2009 was recorded in Buffalo, N.Y. the final stop on SK's recent North American tour. The DVD is a good introduction for newbies, and offers a mix of old hits ("Flying Jelly Attack," "Antonio Baka Guy," "Johnny Johnny Johnny," "Banana Chips") and newer jewels ("Giant Kitty," "BBQ Party," "Pyramid Power"), all detailed in crisp, clear AV.

Japan's version of aging rockers (SK have been around in one form or another since 1981, and lead singer, guitarist and co-founder Naoko Yamano is 49) continue to produce what they've perfected: simple, catchy three-minute songs overlaid with silly lyrics (often about food) sung in Japanese and broken English, a sound often likened — not always affectionately — to K-Tel punk.

But the DVD offers the biggest (visual) clue to the band's complexity: what looks like three teenage girls who should be way out of their element — playing loud, full-steam rock in roll on too-big instruments, *in Buffalo*, for crying out loud, halfway across the world from home — somehow managing to seem right at home. This is SK's ineluctable charm. Because if three diminutive Japanese women can produce such exuberant, infectious racket, and Cobain can feel like a little girl, then surely anything is possible.

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