



THE TOASTERS

CBGB's Live June 28, 2002 – The Bowery Collection

MVD Audio

Between the rankin' scats of ENGLISH BEAT and the college-friendly punk-ska fusion of THE MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES came THE TOASTERS out of New York. Though THE TOASTERS have been kicking and picking brass-laced two steps since the early eighties when ska pioneers MADNESS broke big commercially, these legends of the underground, along with VOODOO GLOW SKULLS have done more to pioneer the wah-ah wah-ah wah-ah skritch of contemporary zoot music that broke big momentarily in the mid-to-late nineties.

Having long relocated from his native England, Rob "Bucket" Hingley is the lone mainstay from THE TOASTERS that delivered *Skaboom*, *Thrill Me Up* and *New York Fever*. The sound of tone-punched trumpets, trombones and sax set to an uppity street dance rhythm followed Hingley through future albums such as *Dub 56* and *Don't Let the Bastards Grind You Down* while THE TOASTERS at-large have subsided on reissues, compilations and a slew of live recordings (assuredly THE TOASTERS' principal foray), which would make it only appropriate that *CBGB's Live June 28, 2002 – The Bowery Collection* should surface.

A testament to the diverse tastes of late CBGB's owner Hilly Kristal, *CBGB's Live June 28, 2002 – The Bowery Collection* plays alternative counterpart to other releases in this series of charity-based live albums such as recordings from THE MOONEY SUZUKI and TERROR. As CBGB's was mostly heralded as a safe haven for punk rock, thrash and hardcore bands over the years, not to mention breaking in some of modern rock's most recognizable names like TALKING HEADS, BLONDIE and the RAMONES, it's fitting that a renowned ska band like THE TOASTERS would be showcased there.

THE TOASTERS are as unabashedly New York as any band having waltzed through the defunct rock club as evidenced on *CBGB's Live June 28, 2002 – The Bowery Collection*. Laden with f-bombs and drunken sloshery from Hingley and his cohorts, THE TOASTERS get as rowdy as their sometimes acerbic audience, at times trying to keep order in the midst of an agitated performance. The presentation isn't exactly tight, shucking tunes from their considerable catalog largely from *Enemy of the System* ("Sitting On Top of the World," "Modern World America" and "Can I Get Another?") and *New York Fever* ("Shebeen," "Social Security" and "Ploughshares Into Guns") while sloshing through other cuts like "Mona" and "Run Rudy Run."

In general *CBGB's Live June 28, 2002 – The Bowery Collection* is lively and raucous, but it is also a major train wreck with an apparently inebriated conductor clicking tickets aboard his frequently out-of-tune ska fiesta car. Are THE TOASTERS drunk or simply off their game? You be the judge, but as much fun as THE TOASTERS can be live, this recording is full of flaws, hiccups and knots that are hard to digest at times. The flow is raw, but not necessarily for the right reasons; the TOASTERS are customarily tighter than this onstage. At the heart of this debauched show, however, is an amusingly lowbrow toot and honk affair given assistance from more than a few pints. All vintage New York...

- Ray Van Horn, Jr.