



MEMORIES from the Bowery

Released from the vaults; live CB's discs cover it all

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CBGB's was a club/bar in Manhattan down on the Bowery at Bleeker Street. It was the manger in which the bastard rock baby Punk was born "cause there was no room anywhere else for it to be birthed. If there were no CB's there might not be any Ramones, Patti Smith, Television, Blondie, Dictators or any bands that were inspired by those or any of the other bands that came from the stinky depths of the club. Without CB's many later bands wouldn't have had a venue to play. No Sunday hardcore matinees through the 1980s, no little, folk stage next door in the Gallery (which opened in the late 1980s), nothing. Closing in 2006 the memories are long and as deep as the bathrooms were horrifying.

One of the great things about CB's was the sound. That factor accounted for many a band taping their performance when they hit the stage, often letting them go as live demos and such. And it's a damn good thing that the sound system worked well because someone is capitalizing on that and letting us all relive or

hear some new memories from the days before the club's address became a home for a fashion boutique.

MVD Audio (www.mvdb2h.com) is putting out a series of cds called the CBGB OMFUG Masters (it stands for Country BlueGrass and Blues and Other Music For Uplifting Gormandizers). Each "Bowery Collection" disc released is a live recording, straight from the CB's board. And the discs cover the wide span of acts and genres that the stage held over the recent years.

The first batch in the series was dropped on March 18. And the first cd heard was from hardcore brutal-Italians **Terror** recorded at CB's on June 10, 2004, which, as vocalist **Scott Vogel** says on the disc, is the first time the band had ever played in New York. The disc starts out with the incredible **Better Off Without You** and keeps the relentless going all damn day or at least for the half hour the 11 tracks run for. The band has more in common with older hardcore from 15 to 20 years ago than it does with the newer, metal-core and beatdown-core of recent years. **Terror** can whip through a break-neck fast part and dive right into an old school breakdown and then toss in some

"chugga, chugga" metal riffs while not sounding all slow and sluggish and metallic and yawn-inspiring. The sound is amazing and not full of the outer noise and hisses and pops. It's amazingly clean. And you get all the between song shout-outs, "Let's tear shit up" crowd encouragement and some crowd yelling that doesn't overpower and adds to the whole live vibe and wild amped-up feel. Go crazy go nuts. This shit kills.

The second disc is by fuzzed up, garage rockers **The Mooney Suzuki** recorded June 29, 2001. This is one amped-up sumbitch of a record. Not many recordings have honestly captured the pill-up swagger garage of a band like the Mooney Suzuki (There is **Speed Connection II** by **The Fleshtones** but c'mon now... that's The Fleshtones). This record does. Each note of rockin' tunes like **Singin' A Song About Today** or **Everything's Gone Wrong** is crystal and taut. The band was truly on fire that night and it's all been snagged on disc; all the rock and roll testifying, all the call and response, all the sweaty black suits, it's all been dumped onto plastic. Ten tracks clocking in at 32 minutes and some change. And it's all good.

The final release is the live disc from ska masters **The Toasters**. When you think third wave, American ska you pretty much can start your family tree with NY's **Toasters**. Startin' the skank back in 1981 this recording is from June 28, 2002. And it's all kinds of live. Having a 20 years worth of material to pull from for a set list, the **Toasters** bounce through a solid 11 songs in just under an hour with tunes going back to their first recordings (**Shocker!** and **Run Rudy Run** from 1987) up through what was then new tunes from their 2002 album, **Enemy of the System**. Lots of onstage chatter and crowd interaction gives the real feel of a small club and the band immersed in their performance and getting the crowd to have a boat load of fun. And it's sure as shynola that the folks on this record are having a blast. Tight sounds of both the band and the attendees. Good time.

MVD Audio is doing us all a great service by putting out these live recordings. And these first three releases are a dang fine example of what is to come. Look for similar "Bowery Classics" by punk pop Lords **The Queers** and NYHC good-timers **H2O** in the coming months.