



## DVD REVIEW

## TSOL

*The Early Years Live*

MVD (4696)

Grade: ★★★

Like the ultimate fashion victims, TSOL constantly shifted its style with the prevailing wind. In its earliest incarnation, the group stormed the moshpits with ferocious, politically driven hardcore. Then they heard The Cramps and slithered off into gore-fest themes delivered in a down-and-dirty rock style.

In 1982, the band added a keyboardist and began flirting with the darkside, or more accurately, suavely surfed their way between New Wave and proto-Goth proto-punk. What saved TSOL's bacon was with each dramatic shift they returned sounding better than ever... at least for a few more years.

In the studio, TSOL's music was always coherent; onstage, not so much, as the band

gleefully revisited all their past facades. That's blatantly obvious from the Flipside archives footage, which captured the band live, in 1983, at an outdoor gig on a sunny California day, a poor setting for TSOL's then doom-laced dance sound. Showcasing the songs from the band's new (1982) *Beneath the Shadow* album, the set also included a handful of earlier numbers. None are remodeled, and when the band abruptly transition into fiery rock or fearsome hardcore, it's pretty startling.

The camera work is middling, and the vocals are lost in the mix for the last third of the set, but even so, it's entertaining stuff. A further trio of songs was shot live around the same time at the Target club, with a final clip capturing the resuscitated band performing in 2007. All told, the music clocks in at under an hour, with band interviews and a reading by frontman Jack Grishman from his new book filling out the space.

— Jo-Ann Greene