



- Left of the Dial Magazine

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[Punk London/Documentary DVD: MVD Visual](#)

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Like the other hallmark documentary of the same period, *D.O.A.*, Wolfgang Buld's gritty, DIYish, insightful study of London during the sonic and cultural blitz of punk makes for an endlessly fascinating folkloric/anthropological study. Not only do viewers get the music pouring from every orifice of celluloid, they get a bird's-eye view of the disagreements, philosophies, in-fighting, struggles to articulate, desultory posing, radical chic saber rattling, and as-it-happened anarchic accounts. The entire film is chock-full of memorable moments, including: a fellow from the Lurkers lounging on his parents couch, discussing the early salad days of three chords and the truth; slick-haired 'Teddy Boys' at a bar decrying punks as weak Third Sex anti-rockers; the Jam live and loud, bending heads and hearts with tunes like *In The City*; Chelsea walking around an art studio (or something like that!) then screwing up the intro to their "hit" *Right to Work* in a claustrophobic close-up zoom; the Boomtown Rats acting goofy per usual on a tiny stage; the Clash looking close and friendly, before all things went haywire for the band; The Adverts rousing audiences with a dubbed-over version of *One Chord Wonders*; and even the mixed sex Killjoys explaining how Birmingham is always one step behind London town. There's even priceless footage of the crew at Rough Trade explaining the genesis of their shop, and Miles Copeland (yes, Stewart's brother, and the honcho behind Chelsea's label) practically dismissing Search and Destroy as he extols raggedy Sniffin Glue's reach (10,000 copies at the time). So, if you expect just an endless barrage of music videos, live action, and quick-paced cuts, this ain't for you. Instead, this is more like an examination and meditation, a way of getting in-between the stories and hype of the time. Both an eyewitness account and a journalistic stab at pulling some hard truth from an era that too quickly fell prey to its own self-performance, the film offers timeless footage, earthy camera work, and a POV that does not bother with platitudes, thankfully.

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