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The Devil Went Home and Puked - Robert Pollard's Rock Show

starring Robert Pollard and Guided By Voices

MVD Visual

Back in the pre-Reagan years, punk rock offered an alternative to the overblown Classic Rock stadium arrangements of bands you now only see on tee-shirts at Target. Short, fast, and snotty were the ideals, and low-budget productions using the wondrous new advance of "videotape" documented everything. Pollard was in the middle of the mosh

pit, ripping off Devo and the rest of the punks. The decades have passed and the complete artiness of Robert Pollard and Guide by Voices is now available on DVD. I'm not sure if that's as culturally important as the Blu-Ray release of *Bikini Car Wash III*, but it's better to keep everything and let the future sort it out. This documentary is quite complete -- early tapes show dates of 1988, and it looks like no piece of video was too insignificant to splice into the stream. Pollard rips off Devo's yellow radiation suit video, uses film montage and 8-bit video processing, and some of the footage takes us up to the most recent decade as we watch the scrawny 1980's Pollard putting on weight and turning grey. I hate when that happens to rock and rollers.

The disc has plenty of special features, although they look pretty much like the "regular features." There are nine videos from Guided By Voices, Circus Devils, and Boston Spaceships showing Pollard in a more formal setting, and two short films -- the minimalist "Gold Star for the Robot Boy" (by Josh Chambers), and "Loving Memories," a dreamy eulogy



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Robert Pollard: The Devil Went Home and Puked
Rockathon

at Amazon from \$8.20

for the band done as one of those sappy-sad photo montages you see when someone's mom kicks off the mortal coil.

The video material is presented with virtually no commentary or reference to when or where they were captured. Much of the film was shot by fans and given to the band. Today the copyright vulture would descend like valkyries, but GBV had a more Grateful Dead approach to fans -- "they paid to see us, and if they want an out-of-focus memory of the evening, who are we to object?" The effect is like a *Night Flight* fast cut mix sequence or New Wave Theater without Peter Ivers' surreal stream of consciousness. Production values are consistently zero-budget, but everything Pollard puts on this compilation is in the spirit of a lo-fi, DIY punk aesthetic that proudly shouts out, "I AM an artist because I say so, and whatever dung I fling at the typewriter is ART!" Go for it man, this is America and we got us an internet. Like Mr. Pollard, we can do anything.

MVD: www.mvdvisual.com

Carl F Gauze

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