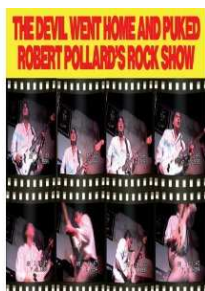


Music on DVD: The Devil Went Home and Puked: Robert Pollard's Rock Show

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

Rating: 1.0/5.0

MVDVideo

67 Minutes



MONSTER MOVIE

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This is an ideal video for those of you who like the idea of Guided By Voices, but lack the attention span needed to make it all the way through both minutes of "Hardcore UFOs." It appears to be a collage of short snippets from a pile of VHS tapes that Pollard found in a box in his basement.

It's important to realize that Pollard is a talented collage artist. Many GBV album covers are his work, and he's done art shows of his collages. I recommend you seek them out. It's just as important, however, to recognize that this is *not* an excellent collage. There's no pattern, no rhythm, no rhyme, no reason. There'll be five or six three-second clips of Pollard performing a song, or doing a sound check, or lying drunk in his bathtub, then half a song, then a video by some band that's probably a Pollard side project but you don't know who they are, then an entire GBV song accompanied by a video that might have been sent to Pollard by a fan who filmed himself dancing around in the pre-YouTube era, then three quarters of a GBV song played live, and so on. Some of this material is fantastic - there's great live footage from every period of Pollard's career, and some interesting videos from a number of his bands. However, the whole is (like Pollard himself at times, of course) a shambling mess. My wife, who likes GBV enough to have read and enjoyed a 300-page biography of the band, couldn't get through it.

Having gotten through it myself, I can say that I've learned something from it. I've always thought of Pollard as having brilliant ideas but lacking the focus and work ethic needed to complete a song. Watching clips of GBV in which the songs are cut off before the end, though, has taught me that I was wrong. As minimalist as he is, Pollard takes each idea, even in collages like "Back to Saturn X Radio Report" (from GBV's 1992 release {Propeller}), to its conclusion. He often sheds musical ideas like verses, choruses, and repeated structures, but there is a musical logic to his songs. Cutting off the ends leaves you in the same state as a piece of classical music that never returns to the tonic.

If you're a truly, insanely, hard-core Pollard fan, you'll want this. If you're that sort of fan, though, you were probably sold on it by my description above. For anyone else, this is mainly a source of frustration. It might, I suppose, rekindle your love for Pollard's music by making you dig out old albums to hear more than ten seconds of a song, but it's easier just to do that in the first place. However surreal a collage might be, a good one hangs together. There's just no unifying idea here - even Pollard himself doesn't serve, because a number of things aren't recognizably his. The singing, songwriting, video quality, editing, and everything else are all over the map. I strongly recommend Guided by Voices to anyone who's somehow missed them so far, but I can't in good conscience recommend *The Devil Went Home and Puked*.

by **Bob McCarthy**



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