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Drop Dead Rock (1996/MVD Visual DVD) + Whisper & Shout (1988/First Run Features DVD)

Picture: C Sound: C+
Extras: C- Films: C-/C+

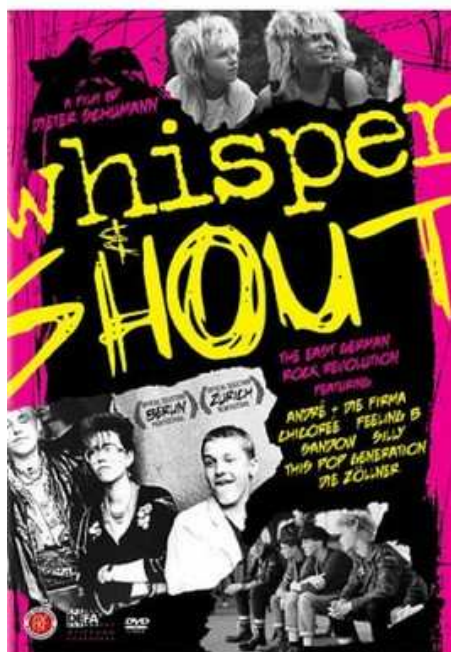
Two very different films do a limited job of showing music movements that helped to cause change, but one is a documentary and the other a very belated feature film that did not work. That they arrive on DVD at the same time is coincidence, but remind us how music and the music industry has declined after what turned out to be its last cultural peak.

The lesser of the two is Music Video director Adam Dubin (The Beastie Boys, Metallica) doing a comedy about an almost anachronistic band called Hindenburg (no Led Zepplin, they are a post-New Wave group doing regular Rock a decade too late; is that part of the joke?) and if they can just get heard by current big Rock star Spazz-O (Ian Maynard), they could (they believe) make it big in **Drop Dead Rock** (1996). It becomes a one-joke comedy that gets thin very fast and though we have seen worse, it is a shame that Dubin and co-writer Ric Menello (**Two Lovers**) could not make this work.

They have Adam Ant (who, save **The Equalizer**, could not get an acting career going despite so much great music made) and Debbie Harry (of the great band Blondie) is in it less (her only acting turn that really worked was in the first **Hairspray**) as a media mogul. Joey Ramone even shows up! They all try, as does the rest of the cast, so it has some ambition. It is just too much, too little, too late... You get the idea.

The documentary is Dieter Schumann's **Whisper & Shout** (aka **flustern & SCHREIEN**, 1988) which shows how a growing movement of politically inclined Rock musicians were making music at some risk to protest the horrible conditions of East Germany, which was the toughest and roughest of the East Bloc Communist powers before is all collapsed. Made a few years before the fall of The Berlin Wall, no one here had any idea that things were about to change so seriously and we learn of a scene that has some Punk, some Glam and is outright Rock.

The songs did not stick with me and what was often protest music is now dated, but that this was even so subversive that any of them (including audience or filmmakers) could have gone to prison and worse is a reminder of how bad things really were in that country, which was the last to hold onto power because their tight police-state grip backfired when the changes came. At 115 minutes here, it is worth a look and is a vital



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- > **ROME – The Complete Series (2005 – 2007/HBO Blu-ray)**
- > **Trial & Retribution – Set Three (Acorn Media DVD)**
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- > **Heat (1995/Warner Blu-ray)**
- > **Fight Club (1999/Fox Blu-ray)**
- > **Red Velvet (2008/3Mac Studios DVD)**

document on what was happening to the end and shows how the discontent was building up in interesting ways. The acts featured include André, Die Firma, Chicoreé, Feeling S, Sandow, Silly, This Pop Generation and Die Zollner.

The 1.33 x 1 image on both are filmed on 35mm film, so it is a shame in both cases that they are softer than they should look, especially when both have good color and a decent look in their own ways. The Dolby Digital 2.0 Mono on each is decent at best and both show their age with the usual sonic limits. Extras on **Rock** include bonus Music Videos and **Shout** include some text on those involved in the film.

- Nicholas Sheffo

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