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Shared Darkness

A Communal Life in Film and DVD, Examined



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Live at the Rock 'n' Roll Palace



This entry was posted on 2/21/2007 6:36 AM and is filed under [DVD Reviews](#).

The first two volumes of this compendium concert series, presented separately in their own Amray cases, **offer forth a nice array of classic rock tunes for the nostalgia-rabid, concert-loving boomer or, alternately, the ones that didn't/couldn't get out of their house and down to their local venue at the time.**

While James Brown, Little Richard, Elvis Presley and (to a much lesser extent) the Beatles were tearing up the charts but also catching head-on flak for corrupting the country's minors, many artists here (the baby-faced Bobby Vee, for instance, and Tommy Sands, derided by edgier deejays for years as "Tommy Blands") were viewed as safe, relatively wholesome alternatives — proof that rock 'n' roll wasn't going to completely unravel the moral fabric of America. While cover groups like The Diamonds ("Why Do Fools Fall in Love," "Church Bells Are Ringing") could never be accused of being ground-breakingly original, they were certainly a solid act in their heyday, and their presence here — alongside highly skilled and under-regarded craftsmen like The Crickets, who would continue to perform as a collective after the tragic death

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of frontman Buddy Holly — is certainly welcome and not entirely unwarranted.

[The first volume](#), housed behind a turquoise jukebox slipcover, contains, among other acts, The Coasters and Del Shannon, The Tokens, Jive Five and The Dixie Cups alongside the aforementioned Sands. Of these, it's probably the Coasters ("Yakety Yak," "Young Blood") and the Tokens (the amusingly forthrightly-titled and double-edged "Tonight I Feel I'm in Love" as well as "The Lion Sleeps Tonight," which still holds up) that come across best, though there's a soft spot in my heart as well for the Dixie Cups' "Chapel of Love," which was a favorite song of an aunt of mine.

[The second volume](#), mirroring the cover of the first release but with pea-green shading, kicks off with Sands, who cycles through "Teenage Crush" and "The Beat Goes On." Ex-Drifter Johnny Thunder (a less frequently mentioned inspiration for Eddie Murphy's James "Thunder" Early in *Dreamgirls*, but part of the amalgamation, alongside James Brown and Little Richard) scores with "Suzi Q" and "Loop de Loop," followed by the previously mentioned Vee, the Diamonds, the little known Johnny Tillotson ("Earth Angel," "It Keeps Right on Hurtin'"), **inarguable highlight the Crickets** ("That'll Be the Day," "Peggy Sue") and saxophonist show closer Ace Cannon.

Recorded at the Rock 'n' Roll Palace in Orlando, **these concerts are latter-day affairs, meaning there's a slight whiff of mothball melancholy already attached to certain performances, and not the heady contact high of some of their original inceptions.** While there are unfortunately no supplemental extras, each disc runs approximately 60 minutes, and comes presented on a region-free disc, meaning that these hits of yesteryear are set to travel and A-OK for worldwide play. **B- (Concerts) C- (Discs)**

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