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Spin Control

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ROCK

Robin Trower, "Living Out of Time -- Live" (Ruf) **1/2

Onetime Procol Harum boy wonder Robin Trower carved out a successful solo career in the '70s, releasing two monstrous solo albums that showcased his guitar mastery before settling in to a journeyman's production schedule of one hit-and-miss record per year.

His comeback began with the 2004 release of "Living Out of Time," an updated take on his usual formula of psychedelic-blues-based power riffing on his Fender Stratocaster.

This CD and DVD were recorded in Bonn, Germany, on March 9, 2005, his 60th birthday and the start of his first tour in three years. He trots out five of his classic tunes, augmented by an even split between the recent studio album and material from his middle period.

Trower plays brilliantly, as might be expected, on the five favorites, most notably "Daydream" and "Too Rolling Stoned." For most of the rest of the disc, you'll listen once, then fast-forward a lot. He does get extra credit for finding a vocalist in Davey Pattison, who sounds eerily like the late James Dewar.

Jeff Johnson

KIDS POP

Devo 2.0, "Devo 2.0" (Disney Sound) ***

As electronic-music pioneers and heady social theorists critiquing the explosion of corporate culture and the ensuing "de-evolution" of mankind, Ohio's post-punk heroes Devo were one of the most subversive bands in the history of rock. So is this group-sanctioned new project the ultimate corporate sell-out, stooping even lower than its recent Swiffer commercial, or is it the most thoroughly twisted prank and brilliant bout of brainwashing it's ever attempted?

How about a little of both?

Disney cast the five 10- to 13-year-old members of Devo 2.0 as it might have a sub-"American Idol" kiddie band, selecting lead vocalist Nicole Stoehr from among 1,000 applicants. Devo recorded new backing tracks for several of its classic hits and wrote two new originals, "Cyclops" and "The Winner," while the hired, flower-pot-wearing Booji boys and girls did the singing a la those annoying "Kidz Bop" collections, gently toning down the more overt double entendres of some of the lyrics. (You didn't think "Whip It" was really about the rodeo and "Peek A Boo" paid homage to the playground game, did you?)