

The Beatles
Live at the BBC
Apple/EMI
6/10

These recordings are without a doubt historic, but history can be boring — even when it comes to the Beatles. Of the 57 songs on this double cd set, there are 43 less than stellar covers of mostly early American rock 'n' roll. The 14 remaining originals sound better on the early Beatles albums, as opposed to these live recordings taped between 1962—65 at various venues for the BBC.

So why is this thing selling like crazy and going to #1 on the charts?

We're talking about Beatles nostalgia here. With the Beatles comes hype and with hype comes sales. It is a great package for die-hard fans since it contains over 130 minutes of digitally re-mastered and previously unavailable material. On top of that, the liner notes are excellent. For each track you get the recording and broadcast date, producer, venue, and an anecdote as well as lots of photos from the sessions.

Overall, this set shows their roots and influences, but lacks the brilliance that comes across on their full fledged recordings with George Martin.

Michael Graham



Blondie
The Platinum Collection
EMI
8/10

"I saw you standing on the corner/You looked so big and fine/I really wanted to go out with you/So when you smiled, I laid my heart on the line..." So begins "X Offender" and *The Platinum Collection* which is a brilliant best of Blondie collection which clocks in at over 150 minutes.

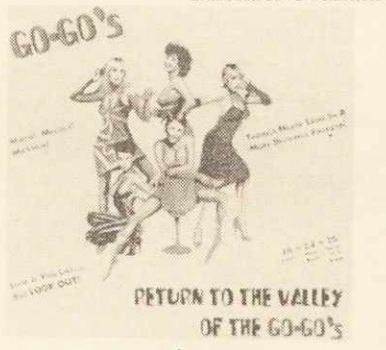
Before I listened to this set, I only knew Blondie for "Heart of Glass." Was I ever in for a treat. Blondie was an amazing band! There are so many great songs here that I can't even start to list them. I think that the various pulls and pushes of disco and punk made this music/band almost schizophrenic. Deborah Harry's distinctive vocals is just the icing on the cake.

The booklet is almost perfect. It includes a good band biography, lots of comments about the songs from band members in the form of a reminiscences: (Nigel: "I'd say 'Dreaming' is my favorite Blondie track." / Jimmy: "It was inspired by Devo. Chris wanted to do something like 'Come Back Johnny,' but when we finished it, it was very smooth. It's basically a drum solo." / Clem: "I think I overplayed on the track." / Everybody: "You did!"). The liner

notes also includes tons of photos, single covers, a complete family tree and a complete discography. The word "comprehensive" comes to mind.

This set provides a great sampling of Blondie's songs through their six albums, 16 or so singles, and some obscure demos recorded in 1975. And I thought they were a one hit wonder...

Michael Graham



The Go-Go's
Return to the Valley of the Go-Go's
I.R.S./EMI
7/10

Early eighties flashback! While listening to the Go-Go's, images of American Bandstand and bad make-up go through my head. My Go-Go's memories are pretty hazy. I remember an album and video with them pretending to be water-skiing, then a photo with them in a bubble bath, and then I have a vision of them splashing around in a wading pool. Pretty cheesy stuff.

In keeping with that image is the relatively new double cd *Return to the Valley of the Go-Go's*. The first disc is interesting because most of it is so raw. Rehearsals and live shows from '79-'81 show their gradual transition from punk to pop. The second disc contains b-sides, cuts from their albums, a couple live tracks and three new songs. Some of the songs are flops, but all in all it's great, fun, throw-away pop for musical packrats like myself.

The disappointing thing about this set is the small and very cheesy booklet. It gives a barely readable history of the band, some notes on how the more memorable songs came together, and a ton of really bad candid photos. It would have been nice to see some live photos, or maybe at least a discography.

But overall, this is a good collection. From their late 70's punk demos to their four quintessential bubble gum pop hits: "We got the Beat," "Our Lips are Sealed," "Vacation,"

and "Head over Heels." And ending off the 110 minute set are three new tunes... theey're baaaack!

Michael Graham



PHOTO: JAMES BEDDINGTON

by James Beddington

Well I'll start with the bar, since it was my first time in the newly renovated Birdland (formerly Brunswick Hall). It was big, clean and sparsely populated but it is a nice place to be, and they got rid of the carpeting which used to annoy me (it no longer matches the plaid lining of my coat.)

One Inch Punch, Madhat, Cactus, Frothing Fish
Birdland
January 7, 1995

The show didn't start until 10:45 or so but moved along quickly after that. Frothing Fish took to the stage in costume and played fairly well. The band uses a lot of heavy metal style guitar without letting it turn into speed chord worship. They have not had much chance to practice recently but it didn't show. The band thought that the gig went well.

Cactus is a spirited trio whose energy was infectious. They claimed that they made mistakes, but it was a really good show nonetheless.

My feelings on Madhat are a little bit ambivalent. Due to the need for diction, I found that the band was tight musically and the songs were

well constructed, but I wished that I had been able to hear the lyrics. Clear lyrical delivery is what makes or breaks a band like Madhat for me. They are good but they are still falling on the wrong side of the line, especially since the singer's voice is so clear. I admit that I'm a fan of great vocals and it disappoints me to see potential go to waste.

One Inch Punch. I finally got around to seeing them. A friend told me that I would get a kick out of them and I did. This band put out an

electricity that was palatable. They are a bizarre mix of contradicting styles; jazz for the bass, speed metal for guitar, rap and hip hop vocal style, and mainstream/industrial drumming.

It was interesting and fun but limited. It was the clash of styles that left them very little elbow room as far as a sound goes. At two in the morning, at that volume, songs started to sound too similar to one and another. All in all it was a good show although it ran a little late.

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