

A track by track recounting of the set

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ORIGINAL ALBUM

"Pop Party," The Poodle Boys - A quick, two-minute burst of energy from this recently reunited band. It's a little less distorted than old-school punk and clearly has a bit of a new age zeal, but it's no less effective. Think early Elvis Costello. "Subdued Theme," Subdueds - Every band, in our opinion, should have a theme song. Well, this cool little anthem, which features Rope's Sal Paradise on bass and vocals, is immediately hummable. And what a great guitar riff.

"Talkin' 'Bout You," Scout House - With a little surf guitar mixed in, "Talkin' 'Bout You" is totally '80s. How can you tell? Well, besides the music, how 'bout the two apostrophes in the title? We can't get enough of Gary Barlow's lead vocal.

"In the Inside," Hot Bodies - This one's a little slower, with Ricky Rondo employing guitar effects to almost simulate strings. There's more pop inherent here, and bassist Scott Harris' bass line kills. It's all very Velvet.

"Hey Joni," The Furors - Who doesn't love The Furors? Joined by bassist Jay Schiavone at the time, Tom Dans and Derek Holcomb deliver a great pop song, like always. The breakdown in "Hey Joni" makes us happy. So does the hand-clapping.

"Muckraker," Saucers - With "It Happened" compiler Craig Bell on bass and vocals and former Miracle Legion front man Mark Mulcahy on drums, this guitar-solo-driven tune works for almost four minutes. The keyboard line really makes the tune.

"That's Life," The Snotz - This droll little number with singer Darryl Leek speaking the verses and singing the choruses kind of co-opts some elements of '50s R&B, but it still sounds current, even by today's standards.

"Dear Abby," TV Neats - The TV Neats sounds like all the members were constantly listening to The Cars and Cheap Trick back in the day. We don't think there's a poppier tune on this compilation, which shouldn't be surprising since the band includes Spike Priggen. This tune should have been a hit. Really.

"Small Talk," International Q - A clear slab of late '70s and early '80s punk. We're not sure, but singer/guitarist Dean Pittsinger might not be saying anything at all. It sounds like gibberish.

"Funeral Row," Troupe Di Coupe - The most experimental band on this comp, Troupe Di Coupe experiments with horns and instrumentation. Vocalist Shadoobi sounds like he

listened to a whole lot of Roxy Music. In fact, the whole band probably did. Not that there's anything wrong with that.

"Same Old Shit," No Music - With a chord progression only slightly different than The Romantics' "What I Like About You," No Music clearly has a catchy little ditty here. Unfortunately, the lyrics would never let this one on the radio.

"Do The Right Thing," October Days - The longest track on the original album, "Do The Right Thing" takes plenty of time to get going before becoming an atmospheric gem. Again, this has a whole lot of Velvet Underground influence.

"Living in Alaska," The Bats - With future in-demand producer and multi-instrumentalist Jon Brion on guitar and drums, The Bats know how to make a cool, quick little pop song. This is a fun little song driven by the the two guitars of Brion and Bill Murphy.

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"It's Not Enough," Stratford Survivors - Independisc's Gary Vollono just loves these guys, and it's pretty easy to understand why. This chorus plants itself in your brain.

"Somebody Move," Disturbance - Bud Lyon's bass line drives this song. And we just love tunes with cool bass lines.

"Give Me A Second," The Excerpts - Another band featuring Jon Brion, The Excerpts sounds like a cross between Cheap Trick and ELO. And that's a great, great thing. We love this tune. The chorus will leave you singing along for days. The Excerpts also include Dean Falcone and Jim Balga.

"Baby No More Tears," Epitome - This tune's oddly noisy. Keith Amo's vocals and synths are quite creepy.

"Today You're Laughing," Valley of Kings - At barely over two minutes, Valley of Kings packs a whole lot into this song. We love the atmospheric lead guitar from Gabriel Cohen.

"Paint Me in a Corner," The Not Quite - A very cool pop song that puts the vocals low in the mix and brings the bass and drums up front. It's an interesting technique that actually really works. We just wish the keyboards were higher.

"No Nothing," The Sabres - With members with last names like Storm, Noyes and Fingerz, The Sabres just have to be good. And, we'll just say, Noyes' guitar line is our favorite of the compilation.

"Communism," Dada Banks - Another one that's a little long for this kind of song, but it doesn't hinder the tune. A good drinking game would be to take a sip every time Hank

Hoffman says the word "Communism." You'd be done two minutes in. By the way, the end turns into a raucous version of The Troggs' "Wild Thing."

"The Man in the Chinese Puzzle,"

Radio Reptiles - Reptiles are slinky, which means it makes sense to call "The Man in the Chinese Puzzle" totally slinky. It's a pop tune that creeps up on you and then explodes.

"Do You Wannit," The Cadavers - Larry Loud fronted The Cadavers. That's all you need to know. The guitar is quite loud.

"I Love NY I Hate NY," The Plan - Another band featuring "It Happened" compiler Craig Bell that also includes his wife, Claudia Bell. This one's lyrics are fun. Forrest Harlow's vocals make this tune. We like this one a lot.

"Planned Community," Happy Ending - This one's especially poppy, in more of a mid '80s kind of way. The way the vocals are high in the mix is a big difference for this comp. We like the backing vocals. It's got an early Camper Van Beethoven thing going on. Woo-hoo.

"Out of Step," The Reducers - Adding The Reducers to this compilation completes it. "Out of Step" is simply a great song, exactly what you'd expect.

Patrick Ferrucci

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