

REVIEWS

THE BEST OF FRIDAYS



[Shout Factory]

Television execs have long followed a simple rule: If at first others succeed, try, try, try to copy what they're doing. That explains *Fridays*, ABC's bid to capitalize on the success of NBC's *Saturday Night Live*. The show premiered in 1980 and ran for three seasons, and while comedy aficionados can debate whether the cast—featuring Larry David and Michael Richards—stands up to SNL's, the music bookers certainly held their own.

The show leaned heavy on album-oriented rock and New Wave—not surprisingly, given the target demographic of young white males—and the same goes for this five-disc set. Highlights include two bands making their U.S. television debuts: the Clash, who look tremendous and run roughshod over four *London Calling* classics, and the switchblade-sharp Stray Cats, who cruise through "Stray Cat Strut" and "Rock This Town." Dire Straits and Tom Petty bridge the gap between punk and classic rock with their tight performances, while Ric Ocasek of the Cars seemingly competes with Graham Parker to see who can wear bigger sunglasses.

Elsewhere, Kim Carnes does her female Rod Stewart thing, and Kiss goes Spinal Tap with tunes from their *Music From "The Elder"* concept album. Shout Factory probably isn't counting on music being the main draw—otherwise, they might have included the Jam and TV-smashing Plasmatics to lure punk fans or Paul McCartney to entice boomers. But this curious grab bag is a fun reminder of when Pat Benatar ruled the airwaves and even Paul Stanley rocked a purple headband. —Kenneth Partridge

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