

REVIEWS

JOEY RAMONE

*...Ya Know?*

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Joey Ramone embodied rock 'n' roll at its most joyous and elemental, from the mid-'70s—when he and his fellow Ramones basically invented punk—to his death in 2001. The lovably gawky frontman bleated fast and catchy songs about loving pop culture and living the life of a weirdo outsider. His second posthumous solo album revisits these ideas, and if “Rock 'N' Roll Is the Answer” and “New York City” are mellower than his early classics—more bubblegum hard-rock than blitzing punk—they retain his no-frills, maximum-fun aesthetic. The album came together thanks to Joey's brother, Mickey Leigh, who enlisted the likes of Joan Jett and Steven Van Zandt to play on unfinished demos. Certain songs inevitably take on unintended poignancy on posthumous albums of this kind, and *...Ya Know?* is no exception. On the acoustic “Waiting for That Railroad,” Joey's Ronnie Spector-indebted vocal hits like a subway car to the heart, while the closing T. Rex cover “Life's a Gas” gives this legend a fitting epitaph. —Kenneth Partridge

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