

Bow Wow — Bow Wow (1976)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Heart's On Fire* — 3:54 02. *Brown House* — 4:54 03. *Foxy Lady* — 3:05 04. *Volume On* — 3:48 05. *A Life In The Dark* — 1:24 06. *James In My Casket* — 9:48 07. *Withered Sun* — 5:22 08. *Theme Of Bow Wow* — 3:47 Kyoji Yamamoto — lead guitar, lead vocals, percussion Mitsuhiro Saito — guitar, lead vocals Kenji Sano — bass, vocals Toshihiro Nimi — drums, percussion, vocals

Releasing a greatest-hits set only four studio albums into a band's career would seem rather premature under normal circumstances, but in the case of the hallowed Bow Wow -- Japan's foremost hard rock force of the late '70s -- that decision proved all too fitting, as it effectively marked the end of an era. Indeed, although the group would carry on releasing dozens of albums in a variety of guises and different lineups over the next few decades, none has matched the importance (some the quality, yes) of the band's pioneering early days, when they were spearheading Japan's homegrown heavy metal revival. Even more remarkable is how this "era" spanned a mere three years due to Bow Wow's exceptionally prolific production schedule, which literally saw them racing from their formative eponymous debut in 1976 to the following year's adrenalin-fueled masterpiece *Signal Fire* and equally essential successor, *Charge*, before culminating in the explosive in-concert document *Super Live*, released in early 1978. The first three are all generously represented in this 12-song collection (especially *Signal Fire*, with fully half of the chosen tracks), and a fun-filled encore of Eddie Cochran's "Summertime Blues" nods to the live opus, but it's telling that not a single track was cherry-picked from Bow Wow's already issued fourth album, *Guarantee*, as this had constituted an unfathomable departure into soft rock territory. In fact, it may well have been this career-stalling change of direction (pursued further on several subsequent albums before the band's red-faced metallic rebirth) that prompted this hasty act of anthologizing on the part of Bow Wow's record company. In any case, for a one-stop glimpse into why Bow Wow were so special and really mattered in the grand scheme of worldwide hard rock and heavy metal, there's no better CD to pick up than this one. --- Eduardo Rivadavia, Rovi

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