



## [Live at CBGB 1982](#)

Title: [Live at CBGB 1982](#)

Artist: Bad Brains

Label: [MVD Visual](#)

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Date: 2006

As we mentioned in our special November Black Rock edition of *Black Grooves*, Bad Brains is recognized one of the most important bands of the hardcore punk era. This DVD compilation of 1982 footage shot at New York's famed CBGB shows them in the raw glory of their early years, after they had been banned at clubs in their native Washington D.C. and started tearing up stages in the Big Apple. The band alternates between kinetic thrash and deep reggae, doing both with total credibility but not yet integrating the two styles to the degree that they eventually would. The hardcore punk kids in the audience nod their heads in mellow fashion to the reggae numbers, then overrun the stage, thrash and mosh to the hardcore songs. As entertaining as it is to see Bad Brains in their youth, the audience is at least as interesting: They are youthful, multi-racial (though mostly white) exemplars of another New York subculture that was flourishing during the early days of hip hop.

This video won't be for everyone, or even most. Seeing the near-chaos that erupts in these performances brings home how radical punk once was; after one song, vocalist H.R. casually requests over the mic, "Hey, somebody get this dude—he's bleeding." In another moment between songs, he holds up someone's lost keys, while the guys in mosh pit lean against each other, trying to catch their breath. These moments remind the viewer that while to outsiders punk looked like senseless violence, to participants there was camaraderie in its physicality. In one of the last songs on the video, H.R. repeatedly chants, "No matter if you're black/No matter if you're white/Let's all get together/And try to unite.

A [short sample](#) of this video is available on YouTube.

Posted by Mack Hagood

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