



Harp

October 2006
issue

Afro Punk

(AFROPUNK.COM, +/- 151 MINUTES)

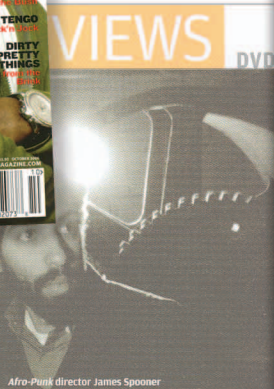
Bad Brains Live CBGB 1982

(MUSIC VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS, +/- 55 MINUTES)

Loud in the margins.



The plight of a marginalized group is always compelling. When you take two such groups—African-Americans and punk rockers—and



Afro-Punk director James Spooner

Henceforth, it's a 120-decidel holy war on etiquette as the band secretes vulgarities, insults, slurs, rampant and profuse puerility, plumber's crack, quotations of crappy Ozzy songs, *Pulp Fiction* references and salty wet stuff. "Alright, fuckin', homos." Dickie stage-raps, "I don't like retardards and I don't like [unintelligible]." While what else Dickie doesn't like is unclear, it's a safe to assume everything. Closing with "Fuck You," the Danny Cooksey-iggly Pop lookin', frontman sings "I'm Dickie, you're shit."

Special features: None.

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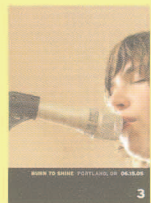
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The group comp you can't group Amer punk

Fire and Love

DIRECTOR BRENDAN CANTY ON THE THIRD INSTALLMENT OF *BURN TO SHINE*.



The third volume of Trixie DVD's #Burn to Shine series is as beautifully and brutally stark as its predecessors. A somber procession of artists (The Decemberists, Lifesavas, Mirah, Sleater-Kinney, Quasi, The Thermals and more) play their lone tune in the lonely, abandoned, doomed house, then la casa es destroyed. It's like the

performances are eulogies leading to an execution to which you've won tickets. Brendan Canty's films (this one curated by The Decemberists' Chris Funk) are sad and gruesome—especially when you discover someone's building a 12,000 square-foot mansion on the site of this noble edifice. Even so, it's also cool to watch such a poetic demise.

Harp: When the house is burning, do you ever get the sense that a life is being taken?

Brendan Canty: I tend to feel the same regret that comes when anything is irreversibly removed from my world. From the moment you see one of these houses, knowing they're doomed informs all of your behavior.

combine them, it's even more so. James Spooner's film discusses the amped-up alienation and camaraderie in a subculture that is often seen—from inside and out—as a sub-subculture. Their struggle is two-fold as they attempt to gain acceptance in all aspects of their lives—except from themselves. Though they exist in the margins, the black punk fans and musicians portrayed in the film (Spooner doesn't identify them, even when they're semi-famous—their character and music is all we're given) know exactly who they are, and if greater social acceptance never comes, that's all they really need to keep living and rocking.

Bad Brains' *Live CBGB 1982* is an excellent après-*Afro Punk*. The seminal hardcore band (no need to for the racial qualifier) is captured on Christmas Eve 1982 as part of a three-day festival at the legendary punk rock club. The 17-song set is a feast of Brains: "Pay to Cum," "Big Take Over," "Coptic Times," "Banned in DC" and more are rendered with a manic intensity that would scare small children and Warped Tour punks.

Special features: *Afro-Punk*: Additional scenes, interviews and performances. CD soundtrack available separately. *Bad Brains*: interviews.

Betty Blowtorch Betty Blowtorch and Her Amazing Real-Life Adventures

(PROVIDENTARY RECORDS, +/- 2 HOURS)

R.I.P. Bianca Butthole



The mandatory angle of Anthony Scarpa's Betty Blowtorch doc is Bianca Butthole: yet another charming, brilliant rocker gone too soon. Without Butthole's (a.k.a. Bianca Halstead) addictions,

sexuality, charisma, intensity and tenderness, the story of the doc is short on material. How they fled from the high-concept (though somewhat lame Butt meet into perhaps the most ferocious, frisky, accessible (meaning as well as hooky) female rock on this side of L7 is just not that resting, even with a disgruntled member (the whiny, self-promotional Bone) and appearances by McKagan and Vanilla Ice. But just because the band didn't have a chance to live out its arc, there would have been a lot more to Betty Blowtorch if a lot of things had panned differently. Naturally.



tenuous structure bands are to begin with, much less an entire scene of musicians. I know even from our short experience doing this, that none of this can last very long.

A counterpoint—do you ever get to help destroy the house? Do you feel a degree of nasty glee?

No, never done it myself. Not much glee except for how beautiful the destruction is. Fire is a hell of a drug.

RANDY HARDARD