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[Bad Brains | Live at CBGB 1982 DVD \(MVD Visual\)](#)



Written by David Lichius

There could not be a more ripe time than now to revisit this watershed period of American popular music.



With the release of Paul Rachman's chronicle of the American hardcore punk scene *American Hardcore* and the final demise of NYC's venerable punk venue CBGB (during its final week, Bad Brains played three straight nights), there could not be a more ripe time than now to revisit this watershed period of American popular music. While the discussion of what hardcore band ruled above all others is more likely to deteriorate into an argument than into any form of consensus, there is no doubt that Washington, D.C.'s Bad Brains are one of the first bands that should enter into that discussion.

Culled from a three-night stand in December 1982, *Live at CBGB* whittles the three performances into a 60-minute blast of fury. While most viewers will lack the

real life experience of just what this band and the scene it flourished in was all about—*Big Takeover* magazine editor Jack Rabid does a solid job of re-painting the picture—one only has to observe the violent and chaotic reaction of the crowd to realize that Bad Brains and numerous other bands had touched—and severed a nerve within popular music. The confluence of events—i.e., late '70s rock and disco—spawned a period that will never be duplicated. All that remains is the word of those who were there and the visual documentation of the shows they experienced.

Simply put, *Bad Brains: Live at CBGB* is an excellent example of that time and place. **B+**

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