

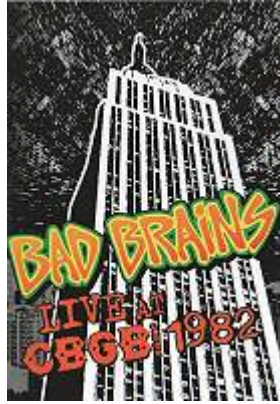


Scanner zine

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MENU

- [Home](#)
- [Interviews](#)
- [Columns/ Articles](#)
- [Top Sounds - Index](#)
- [TV Party - Index](#)
- [Reading Matter](#)
- [Tour Diaries](#)
- [Polls](#)
- [Web Links](#)
- [My Blog](#)
- [Guestbook](#)
- [Mailing List](#)



BAD BRAINS - Live at CBGB 1982 {*MVD Visual*} It's common knowledge that THE BAD BRAINS was one of the most musically talented and ferocious bands to be born out of the original USHC boom. By all accounts, the band was rather bigoted in its opinions too - but that's not discourse for this review. This is a live compilation DVD featuring 24 tracks of skin-blistering, brain-boiling, intestine-melting intensity recorded over three nights (Christmas Eve to Boxing Day, 1982) at the now defunct but legendary New York City club, CBGBs.

The DVD starts in fine form, setting the mood with a bunch of Punks outside the club that clearly state this ain't no Christmas Party! The action switches to inside CB's, Punks starting flooding onto the stage, thrashing wildly to Earl Hudson's thumped intro to 'Big Takeover'. As Dr Know's electrifying lead line cuts in the whole venue seems to explode before H.R. hits the stage like some kinda whirling, screaming, shaking dervish. From there, each song is a classic: 'Banned in DC', 'Attitude', 'Riot Squad', 'Right Brigade', 'Coptic Times' and 'Pay To Cum' - some of them appear twice culled from different shows.

The quality of the footage is, essentially, bootleg. It's recorded on 2 hand-held cameras (which, given the crazed nature of the band and audience, capture the shows' intensity incredibly well) with varying degrees of sound quality. The sound from what appears to be the second show on the disc proves to be the best of the bunch, being clear and punchy. But this was no major-league rock star event captured on 48-track digital perfection. This was 1982; this was filmed during the founding days of USHC; this was THE BAD BRAINS in CBGBs - I'd be disappointed if it had been desensitised, over-dubbed perfection. What is a let down are the extras. Listed as 'Interviews from 1982', one assumes they are with the band. It's actually 5 brief minutes of chats with Punks out of the audience. They have little to say of interest - especially the chick from DC who had her hand run over by a car. That's your interviews over. Then there's a live audio track of 'I And I Survive' - at least I assume it's live, it sounds way rawer than the version on the album of the same name. Finish. Disappointing is not the word. The liner notes, written by Jack Rabid of Big Takeover zine, are well worth reading. He attended the shows and has a way of writing that is almost as energised as the performances themselves.

The disc does stand as a great document of a band that broke all the barriers, both social, political and musical. It's a document of a time in Punk's own history that will not and could not ever be repeated. As a historical document, it's essential viewing... Just wish those extras could live up to the band's legacy and quality of the live performance.

| Rules = No Rules |