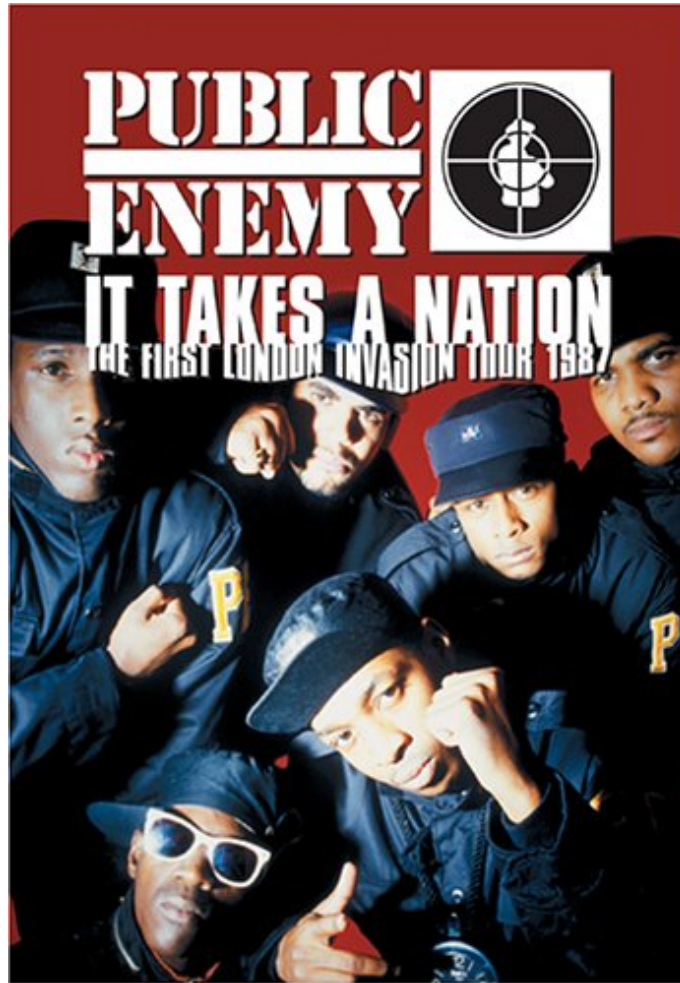




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May 24, 2005

Public Enemy - It Takes a Nation, The First London Invasion DVD



Public Enemy
It Takes a Nation. The First London Invasion 1987 - DVD
[Music Video Distributors](#)

Many of you may not know this but I am a fan of a good handful of early rap music. Around 1987 when all these

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youth crew bands were turning punk fans into the jocks the rebelled against years earlier, I was branching out and discovering other genres of music like industrial and rap. Public Enemy (and especially Run DMC) were exciting bands to me, creating a style of music I had never heard before. The early rap scene had a few things in common to punk rock as it was a new form of music that wasn't readily accepted by mainstream America, especially in middle class white suburbia.

At their peak, Public Enemy were a force to be reckoned with. Not content to just sing about themselves and how they were the best rappers on their block (though their early material does cover some of that standard territory), Public Enemy had a message and wanted to shake things up and make people think. Their lyrics were thought provoking, and encouraged people to embrace their heritage, and stand up and make a difference.

The band also had a unique, militaristic visual to their stage show with Professor Griff and the S1W's (Security of the First World) flaking the stage, marching around in their camouflage Military outfits, it was quite the spectacle that couldn't help but command your attention. Chuck D was the prophet, spewing forth his words of wisdom trying to wake people up and Flavor Flav was there to encourage him, but also not let him forget to have fun at the same time. It was a unique dynamic of clown and commander that has never been duplicated.

This video was originally released in the late 1980s on VHS and has been out of print and near forgotten until now with this DVD reissue. It was shot on the big Def Jam tour in 1987 that also had featured LL Cool J, Erik B and Rakim, DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince and others. The visual quality is that of a VHS tape, it doesn't appear to have been restored at all and perhaps the tapes weren't in the best shape. The picture is a bit dark and not the sharpest, but it is still decent. The audio comes in three flavors: stereo, 5.1 surround, and a commentary track. The stereo track sounded the best in this case as the surround mode just ended up sounding a little echoey, though it was louder. The commentary track was pretty cool and was done recently by Chuck D, so you got his perspective of how things were back then. The audio is of average quality, not that of CD quality. This thing must have been a low budget at the time, or done on inferior equipment as the overall quality is not up to today's standards, and while this was done 18 years ago, there was ample technology at the time to have made it sound and look a bit better than it does.

The biggest negative of this, and this isn't limited to only this band or time period, is more often than not, a "live performance" of a rap band equates to the band singing over their records pretty much verbatim. So you hear the music and pre-recorded vocals in the background, while there is live singing over it. As someone who grew up going to shows where everything is 100 percent live, it is kind of a letdown as it is supposed to be a live show, but it isn't really live, its more of a performance done over a LP playing in the background. The performance was high energy though and the crowd seemed to be

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really into it. These gripes aside, it is a nice look back at Public Enemy at their prime.

The DVD features some bonus footage that was a lot more recent of the band playing live (and really playing!) in Australia that looks and sounds excellent. There is a photo gallery of some great vintage photos and there is a bonus audio CD that features the concert plus some extra remixes. While the quality of the concert is obviously the exact same as on the DVD, the remixes are a very nice bonus, and I didn't own any of them previously on any format in my collection.

Overall this DVD isn't bad, but really only mandatory for a hardcore fan or someone who is curious to see how things were nearly two decades ago. I wouldn't recommend it for someone who isn't already a big fan as it isn't the best way to be introduced to the band's music. As a long-time fan of Public Enemy, I was glad to see this was made available again though, with a few neat extras.

[Buy the DVD](#)
[Public Enemy official website](#)

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