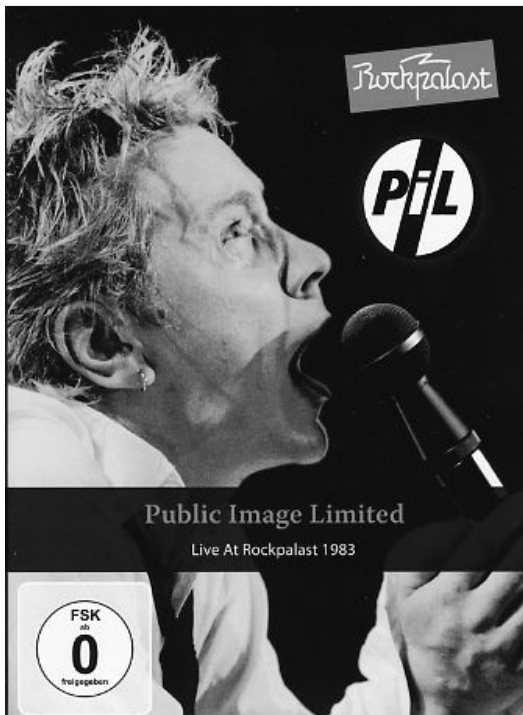


## FAME Review: Public Image Ltd. - Live at Rockpalast 1983

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## Live at Rockpalast 1983

### [Public Image Ltd.](#)

*MIG Music* - MIG 90427 (DVD)

Available from [MVD Entertainment Group](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange  
by **Mark S. Tucker**  
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Though the anarchistic punk milieu was ironically the result of the very bourgeois Malcolm McLaren in a bid for riches via a smashing of the excesses of a gentrifying rock realm, the mode soon bounded far past its origins. One of the more interesting manifestations of that was the transformation of the Sex Pistols, wherein John Lydon mutated from a spit in yer gob job provocateur to a sneeringly cabaretic art animal in a band and format that had surprising sympathies to Pere Ubu. Yeah, **that** band, Public Image Ltd., about which most, me included, never were, still aren't, and probably never will be quite sure what the fuck went on there.

More than once during this intriguing recording of a 1983 gig for Rockpalast at Zeche, Bochum, Germany, the camera zeroes in on Lydon's mercurial face, catching him in a cynically amused regard for everything that's going on, eyes sparkling with mischief and a jaded backscatter that almost descends into decadence. If, like me, you held on to the group's LPs, not sure what to make of them but sure as hell unwilling to let 'em go, then this DVD is going to clear a lot up. PIL, it turns out, was a group you really had to watch to fully understand. And this isn't the founding line-up. In fact, Wikipedia, which has a pronounced tendency to fuck up everything it touches despite usefulness as a go-to for initial reference before getting serious, doesn't list even one of the instrumentalists as past members here, all of whom are quite good, psychedelizing the concert hall as Lydon holds forth.

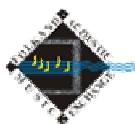
The DVD's liner notes claim Lydon was out to deny and destroy all stereotypes within the punk movement, and it's an on the money remark, 'cause what happens here is kinda like a blend of Television and Howard Devoto's Magazine with aspects of Ministry's over-the-top droney-Hawkwind period in *In Case You Didn't Feel Like Showing Up*. PIL isn't nearly so crushingly metallic as all that but it definitely leaves the extremely limited punk milieu in the dust in a neo-progressive climate, almost shockingly so. I have no doubt even Big Johnny's most beatific fans were knocked for a loop during just about any period of the band's 14-year first era (the group resurrected in 2009). More to the point, I'd cite this DVD release as not just a window into an enigmatic band but even go so far as to say it's important because there's a unique presentation going on here that isn't often encountered. But don't take my word for it, see for yourself.

### Track List:

- Public Image I (Levene / Lydon / Walker / Wardle)
- Annalisa (Levene / Lydon / Walker / Wardle)
- Religion (Levene / Lydon / Walker / Wardle)
- Memories (Dudanski / Levene / Lydon / Wardle)
- Flowers of Romance (Levene / Lydon)
- Solitaire (Atkins / Levene / Lydon)
- Chant (Dudanski / Levene / Lydon / Wardle)
- Anarchy in the U.K. (Cook / Jones / Lydon / Matlock)
- (This is not a) Love Song (Atkins / Levene / Lydon)
- Low Life (Levene / Lydon / Walker / Wardle)
- Under the House (Atkins / Levene / Lydon)
- Bad Life (Atkins / Levene / Lydon)
- Public Image II (Levene / Lydon / Walker / Wardle)

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