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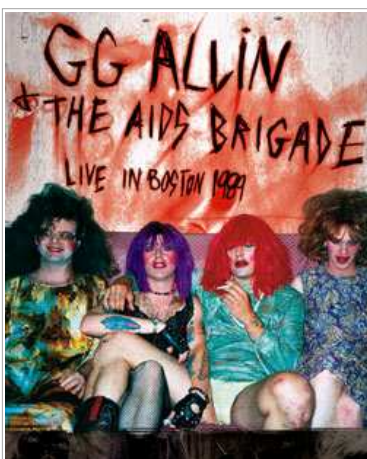
# I Live to Be Hated: GG Allin, 'Live In Boston 1989,' on DVD

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Confrontational performance art is always a tough sell. But it's sure a lot easier to sell the transgressive artistic legacy of Carolee Schneemann or Diamanda Galas than it is to sell the world on punk legend [GG Allin](#). Depending on your stomach, Allin was either a disturbed exhibitionist or a trailblazing, aggressive artist who shoved the ugliest truths about life and humanity before us and dared us not to look away.

Fortunately, there is now DVD proof of Allin's reign of terror for you to judge yourself. "[Live In Boston 1989](#)" makes a pretty good



case that, nearly 20 years after his death, Allin was more of an artist than his haters would like to admit. But the disc also shows that he didn't exactly make it easy for people to appreciate his art. When you perform naked and defecate onstage, Artforum might be slow to take notice.

Allin was a punk at heart, and it was the disturbing viciousness and realness of his presentation that kept him grounded in the tradition of rock. Allin took Iggy Pop's self-loathing and built on it by making like the Meatmen and the Angry Samoans and loathing everything in sight as well.

He came by all of this honestly. He was allegedly born Jesus Christ Allin to a fanatically religious father who abused his family. He claimed he started cross-dressing in high school after being inspired by the New York Dolls, and one of the more amusing sections of this DVD shows him and his band getting dolled up by a group of female makeup artists.

Both his stage presentation and offstage lifestyle were so extreme that they crowd out his actual musical legacy in the minds of most people who recognize his name. "Live In Boston 1989" is at its most interesting when it seeks to change that, putting the focus on GG the rocker, not the GG the sideshow attraction.

The song titles tell the story: "Expose Yourself to Kids," "I Wanna [Expletive] Myself," "Look Into My Eyes and Hate Me," "I Kill Everything I [Expletive]" and "I Live to Be Hated." It's interesting to note that at around the same time N.W.A. was catching flak for their incendiary "[Expletive] Tha Police," Allin was already performing a song called "Kill the Police" with little fanfare.

Songs about sexual assault, pedophilia, blatant misogyny? How are we supposed to take this? Is it all a joke? A juvenile bid for attention? Or a look into the male psyche that goes to a place where other "honest" artists dare not tread? The viewer is left to decide.

Allin's band for many of the DVD's live performances, the offensively named AIDS Brigade, actually played a pretty accessible brand of bluesy punk rock; only his barking vocals keep them from sounding like a latter day Dolls or a precursor to the White Stripes. The jamming is good sloppy fun. Which is more than can be said for the quality of most of this DVD, which is shot badly and edited worse. Intros are clipped, transitions are non-existent and the lighting is so poor (and erratic) that you'll be adjusting the brightness and contrast settings on your television or computer at regular intervals.

Two excerpts from 1993 gigs are tacked on as bonus material. These shows, filmed shortly before Allin's death that same year offer much better visual quality, but a lot less musical entertainment — probably because most of his

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