

# FFanzeen: Rock'n'Roll Attitude With Integrity

Through the writings and photography of Robert Barry Francos, a view of the arts and culture, including everyday life.

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## DVD Review: The Stranglers: On Stage, On Screen

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Images from the Internet*



### The Stranglers: On Stage, On Screen

*Directed by Robin Bextor*

*New Wave Pictures*

*Weinerworld Productions*

*108 minutes, 2005-06 / 2012*

[www.NewWavePictures.com](http://www.NewWavePictures.com)

[www.Weinerworld.com](http://www.Weinerworld.com)

[www.stranglers.net](http://www.stranglers.net)

[www.MVDvisual.com](http://www.MVDvisual.com)

In the U.K., Celia and the Mutations... I mean The Stranglers were *huge*. Numerous Top 10 singles and albums line their history. Here in the States, however, nada. They were never able to break the chart barrier, and I believe it was more because of reputation than the music itself.

Though they predated the British punk scene, they were wrongly (in my opinion) lumped in with that lot. Surely they were some

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### About Me

Robert Barry Francos  
Currently living in Saskatoon (email at RBF55@msn.com for address). From 1977-88, I used to publish a print version of a music magazine in New York called FFanzeen, which dealt with the wide-ranging independent music scene. I also photographed many bands from the period (and since). Now I write this blog, and have a column at jerseybeat (dot) com (slash) quietcorner (dot) html. And the beat goes on.

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amalgamation of pub rock with a twist. But even in Wikipedia, the first sentence states: "The Stranglers are an English punk rock music group." I still beg to differ.

But while their music was not punk, their attitudes may be considered as such (when I interviewed the Cramps, then-drummer Miriam Linna insisted that the Ramones were not punk rock, but they personally were punks, meant as a compliment). I remember in the '70s, hearing about the Stranglers' rowdiness, sexist lyrics, and the football mentality of their fans (chanting jocks is how they may be described on this side of the pond). Even on this DVD, the fans are on full furl.

But over time, as their singles and records began to disappear from the punk bins in stores here, apparently they started sliding into the pop range, which means I wouldn't have paid attention to them anyway. Yet, I still have a couple of their earliest LPs and 45s.

That being said, let's discuss the disk at hand. Originally released as *Norfolk Coast Live* in "Jolly Ole," there are two segments to this concert, recorded at Shepherds Bush Empire, London, on December 2, 2005, and presented in the wrong order. The first listed is called "The Electric Set" at nearly 80 minutes, and the second is "The Acoustic Set," coming in at just under 30 minutes. Thing is, the acoustic set was the opening for the show. Thereby if you want the true concert experience, watch the acoustic first. Here the band plays some softer, balladry tunes that are quite lovely at times, including "Tucker's Grave" and their infamous "Strange Little Girl" (once covered by Tori Amos, who named her album after the song).

It really kicks into high gear with the loud and yet highly melodic electric set, which covered the then new album, *Norfolk Coast* (hence the original name of the concert), mixed with some of their fine, older material, such as their covers of the Kinks' "All Day and All of the Night" and Burt Bacharach's "Walk on By." Their oldies but goodies include "Peaches" (of course), "Tank," and their breakthrough "No More Heroes." Hugh Cromwell may be well and gone, but he is barely missed as this version of the Stranglers is strong.

When it came to some of the '80s stuff, I struggled a bit, as I find it a bit cutesy (to be fair, I felt that way about a lot of music through the *now-beloved-by-many* era of over-processed sounds; *oy>*, that '80s electronic drum sound that *still* makes me squirm). I would like to add that adding Paul Roberts to the band was a good idea. He has a powerful stage presence (and I know of a couple of people of both genders who would be impressed by his six-pack).

So, even though there are periods of the Stranglers that are represented here that I would not have even raised an eyebrow about in their time of release, the band brings it around in a way that's palpable for, yes, the punk in my heart.

The last thing on this DVD, and probably the reason for its rerelease is the inclusion of a short 18-minute film from 2006, titled *Norwalk Coast*, of course. It's an intense film starring Jean Jacques Burnel (with most of the rest of the band in cameos, and on the soundtrack). It also has a bit part by Susannah York, who easily would have been in the "Most Beautiful" issue of *People*, if it existed back in the late '60s and early '70s. It's a somewhat depressing tale of ritual murder,

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[Life and Blog of Gary Pig Gold](#)

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[Blitz! Magazine: Mike McDowell](#)

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suicide and revenge. Jean does a great job.

The Strangers continues to tour, even with their nearly 75 year old drummer (the rest of the band are 20 years or more his junior). Hopefully they keep their power, even with the loss of Roberts on vocals since he quite not long after this disk was recorded. Luckily, they have this for when he was in his Stranglers' prime.

**Band:**

Jean Jacques Burnel: bass / vox

Jet Black: drums

Dave Greenfield: keyboards

Paul Roberts: vox / percussion

Baz Warne: guitar / vox

**Electric Set (79 min):**

*Norfolk Coast*

*All Day and All of the Night*

*Death and Night and Blood*

*Big Thing Coming*

*Peaches*

*Skin Deep*

*Always the Sun*

*Long Black Veil*

*I've Been Wild*

*Lost Control*

*Goodbye Toulouse*

*Summat Outanowt*

*Walk on By*

*Duchess*

*Burning Up Time\*

*Toiler on the Sea*

*Time to Die*

*Tank*

*Mine All Mine*

*No More Heroes*

**Acoustic Set (29 min):**

*Instead of This*

*Southern Mountains*

*Dutch Moon*

*Tucker's Grave*

*Strange Little Girl*

*Sanfie Kiss*

*Still Life*