

# FFanzeen: Rock'n'Roll Attitude With Integrity

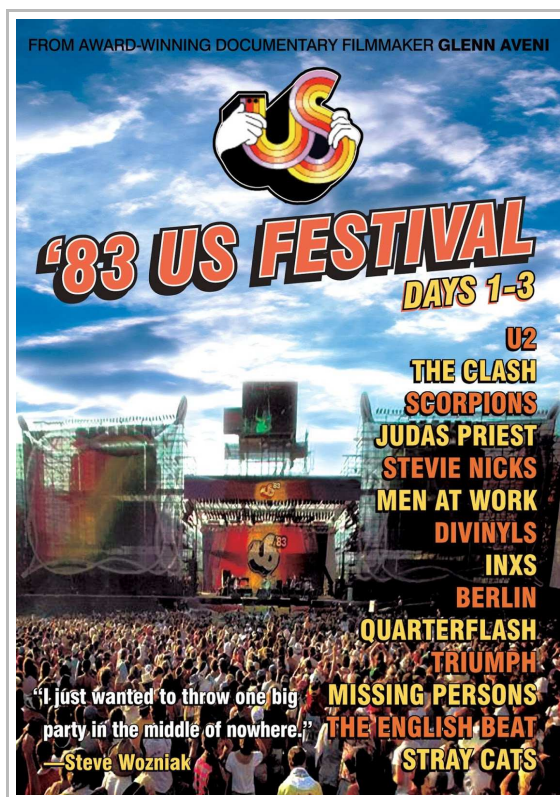
Through the writings and photography of Robert Barry Francos, a view of the arts and culture, including everyday life.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2013

## DVD Review: '83 US Festival: Days 1-3

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Images from the Internet



### '83 US Festival: Days 1-3

Directed by Glenn Aveni

MVD Visual

Unuson Corporation / Icon

135 minutes, 1983 / 2009 / 2013

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

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Before there was Steve Jobs standing on a stage telling us we needed to buy cell phones and tablets, Apple was run by Steve Wozniak. He wanted to take his profits and, much like Sir Richard Branson of Virgin, do everything, Woz, as he was sometimes known, had the idea to spend his money on some tax shelters that he could use to spread the Apple name to the populace. I actually don't mean it as cynical as it sounds, but you know what I'm sayin'.

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The US Festival was a huge music event that drew an average of over 300,000 people per day, and had some of the world's top musicians at the time, as well as those who were on the way up.

By the early '80s, hardcore had a shaky start and was totally not financially viable in any kind of way. Black Flag? Cro-Mags? GG Allin? No one heard of them on a national level, other than something like "...a riot at club so-and-so last night with so-and-so band was playing..."

Also, many bands I was interested in had turned a corner of popularity and had lost my attention. I mean, after the *London Calling* double set, did the Clash *really* do much that was innovative? U2 had become super-obnoxious superstars, Missing Persons had been a cutesy New Wave band who for some reason had a couple of major hits and had lost any club credibility, and I still remember standing on line waiting to see the premiere of *Rock and Roll High School* where a person behind me was wearing a t-shirt that read "Sit on my face, Stevie Nicks."

But like the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, the US Festival as not just about the music, but about the corporate sponsorship, which is well represented here.

#### Day 1 (Saturday, May 28; "New Wave Day"):

The first band up is the Aussie rockers, the Divinyls. This performance was around the time of their breakthrough album, and the one I still consider their best, *Desperate*. They usually ended their set in the early days with this, their first hit, "Boys in Town" (years later it would become their opener). Singer Christine "Chrissy" Amphlett (d. 2013; RIP) would later become better known for her sexually tinged soft rock "I Touch Myself" and "Pleasure and Pain," which is the equivalent of Slade being criminally remembered for "My Oh My" and "Run Runaway." In these nascent days, the Divinyls were a powerhouse, and Christine was like a caged lioness in a schoolgirl uniform. Of course, this is a great version of the song, but at the time, they all were. It is obvious by the red streaks up and down her arms that she had already finished the "Elsie," another of my favorites, where she writes all over her face, arms and legs with a red lipstick. I would have liked to have seen their whole set, but who knows, maybe someday. The Divinyls are worth checking out.

Do you remember where you were when you heard that Michael Hutchence, lead vocalist of (also) Aussie group INXS, had accidentally(?) offed himself in a hotel in 1997, made all the more newspaper fodder and culture fixation by his baby-mama's claim that he was involved in autoerotic asphyxiation? Me neither. I was sorry to hear about him as much as I was about Amy Winehouse or any other overpampered and excessing rock star, but I do have to admit that INXS never meant a whit to me, and I don't think I would know one of their songs if I fell over it. The one here, "The One Thing," sounds pretty much like every other '80s song of the period with that same rhythm and hollow sounding drums. Hutchence, himself, moves well along the stage and is startlingly handsome, but it almost looks like he's trying to channel Jim Morrison.

The English Beat was a fun band with their white ska, much like the more famous Madness. The multi-racial Brit boys are constantly moving around the huuuuuge stage during their song, "Jeanette." But I wonder why they put interviewee Mark Goodman, one of the very first

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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 FFanzen, 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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MTV VJs, talking over them; unfortunately, this is only the start.

The Stray Cats were a decent post-rockabilly band (and acted like assholes to me, but that's another story), though nowhere near as exciting as their New York rivals, the Rockats. "Rock This Town," however, has rightfully become a classic, as they do it here. Actually, it's kind of strange that this Americana music is sandwiched in among a bunch of British and Australian groups.

Men at Work pretty much were a two-hit wonder in the States, and it's interesting that they only do one of them, "Who Can It Be Now," with a recent interview with lead singer Colin Hay talking over some of the instrumental parts. Frustrating; while I'm not a big fan, I do respect them for some reason, and I just think it's insulting to the bands to overwhelm the music with talk, whatever I think of them. They also do their lesser known "It's a Mistake."

Of course, the band I was looking forward to on this first day was the headliners, the Clash. My question (yes, there is always a question) is, since everyone knows that the heart and soul of the Clash was Joe Strummer (do you believe there would be a Mick Jones wall in the East Village if it has been Jones instead of Strummer to pass in 2002?), so why pick a Mick Jones song, even a decent one like "Should I Stay or Should I Go?" I would have gone with "London Calling" at the very least. Perhaps the producers were as stoned as Jones, whose stories rival even Willie Nelson? This was, by the way, the last show with Mick in the band.

*The original line-up for the first day was as follows: Divinyls, INXS, Wall of Voodoo, Oingo Boingo, the English Beat, A Flock of Seagulls, Stray Cats, Men at Work, and the Clash.*

## **Day 2 (Sunday, May 29; "Heavy Metal Day"):**

Even at the time this event was happening, and in fact with many of the fests that the Ramones skewered so well in their "Something to Believe In" video, such as Live AID, when there are shots of the audience, a large amount of them are going to be of either braless women wearing tight clothes, women in bikinis, women sitting on the shoulders of their guys, and women with big...tracks of land, and Monty Python so famously put it. Sexist? Oh, yeah. To be fair, there are a few shots of buff shirtless men, but most males you see are drunk, screaming, or being macho morons. And to think that these people are now in their early 50s with kids around the same age somehow makes me smile.

Everything that made Judas Priest was in place that day, including Rob Halford's riding his 'cycle and leathers onto the stage, his fey manner, and his four octave range. Canadian Hall of Famers, Triumph, for some reason gets the largest number of songs on this collection and is seen on this after JP, though they actually played before. Germany's Scorpions, post-Michael Schenker (wow, I remembered how to spell it!), are also solid, of course, though they don't do their metal classic "Rock Me Like a Hurricane." Oh, well. I noticed that the band incorporated quite a few moves from the Who, such as the mic fling and the windmill.

All three have overlapping themes (hence belonging to the same genre), such as sung verses and screamed/screeched choruses, multiple guitar assaults, loyal fans, and the ability to make me wonder what's

for supper. Yes, I did sit all the way through the DVD of the day.

*The original line-up for Day 2 was as follows: Quiet Riot, Motley Crue, Triumph, Ozzy Osbourne, Judas Priest, Scorpions, and Van Halen.*

### **Day 3 (Monday, May 30; Rock Day):**

Okay, I realize this collection is a three-part special that was released in 2009, but whoever did it, well, I would like to have a conversation. For example, the first band up on the third day, which is more New Wave than the official "New Wave Day," is Berlin. Sure, lots of synth and '80s aesthetic, but I like singer Terri Nunn's voice somewhat (that waiver was very popular then with the likes of Chrissy Hynde, who also played this day, though unseen here). Berlin is given very short shrift thanks to cutting the song to about a minute, and most of that having Goodman talking over it. I agree with what he says, but the producer could have put it between the songs, not over it. Plus, even when you can hear the music, they show the same damn clips of people in the audience (again, mostly women dressed provocatively for the time) that appear on the other two days. C'mon...

Quarterflash never even raised a blip to my peer group, to be honest. I think this is the first time I can remember actually hearing them. And I don't think I missed anything. With Missing Persons, I can imagine people looking back and thinking, WTF? How did they get any serious attention, really?

It's interesting to see U2 so early in their career before Bono and the Edge became prisoners of their personas (wraparound sunglasses, and the like), to paraphrase the wonderful Christine Lavin. And as big as U2 became, there is still talking over them, actually having the balls to compare them to Elvis and the Beatles. No wonder their egos became such monstrosities.

Wait, What? They put a Triumph song from Day 2 in the middle of a collection of Day 3? Certainly they didn't run out of music for the day. They clipped Berlin down to nuthin', and even talked over U2. What were they thinking, and is the producer secretly Canadian? Surely the band didn't return and wear the exact same clothes.

Last up is Stevie Nicks (though Bowie closed the night). I have none of her music in my collection, but I can certainly see why she was so prominent on the bill. Diminutive in size, with Mick Fleetwood pounding the drums behind her, she barrels her way through her two songs, making it look easy. She definitely has one of the most distinct voices in rock, even when she's doing a disco-style version of her solo hit, "Stand Back."

*The original mainstage line-up for Day 3 was as follows: Little Steven & the Disciples of Soul, Berlin, Quarterflash, U2, Missing Persons, the Pretenders, Joe Walsh, Stevie Nicks, David Bowie.*

In conclusion, there is a strong woman starting the festival and a strong woman ending it, and lots of shots of audience bimbos inbetween. The success of the three-day collection (the fourth "Country Day" is not shown) is getting so see some acts that were soon to be gone, most of whom have vanished and others in their nascentcy on their way to superstardom. The failure is due to the lack of respect for the artists by narrating over them, or editing their work. Obviously, what is needed is

a box set of the entire festival. In the meanwhile, this will have to do, but note that many of the clips here are quite available on YouTube, but you didn't get that from me.

### Song List:

Divinyls: *Boys in Town*

The English Beat: *Jeanette*

INXS: *The One Thing*

Stray Cats: *Rock This Town*

Stray Cats: *Double Talkin' Baby*

Men at Work: *Who Can It Be Now*

Men at Work: *It's a Mistake*

The Clash: *Should I Stay or Should I Go*

Judas Priest: *Breakin' the Law*

Judas Priest: *You Got Another Thing Comin'*

Triumph: *Lay It on the Line*

Triumph: *Fight the Good Fight*

Triumph: *A World of Fantasy*

Scorpions: *The Zoo*

Scorpions: *Can't Get Enough*

Berlin: *Sex I'm A*

Quarterflash: *Find Another Fool*

U2: *Sunday, Bloody, Sunday*

U2: *Electric Co.*

Missing Persons: *Words*

Triumph: *Magic Power*

Stevie Nicks: *Outside the Rain*

Stevie Nicks: *Stand Back*

Posted by [Robert Barry Francos](#) at [12:01 AM](#)

Reactions:      interesting (0)      cool (0)      informative (0)



Labels: [1980s](#), [Divinyls](#), [FFanzeen](#), [INXS](#), [Judas Priest](#), [music festival](#), [MVD Visual](#), [Quarterflash](#), [Robert Barry Francos](#), [Scorpions](#), [Steve Wozniak](#), [Stevie Nicks](#), [Stray Cats](#), [The Clash](#), [Triumph](#), [U2](#), [US Festival](#)

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