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'THE HOUSE OF THE RISING PUNK' DVD

'The House Of The Rising Punk' is a documentary about CBGB's and how vital it is since that legendary club no longer exists (I still can't believe that). The importance of CBGB's is gigantic...it's mammoth and still burns brightly even though it's been gone for 2 years now and this truly is a history lesson...the new and future generations of punks must be informed! Otherwise all they'll know are the lame, corporate Clear Channel venues as the real alternative and underground scene loses another piece of it's disappearing soul. Not only was CBGB's the birth of the NY punk scene, it was arguably the birth of the entire punk scene, period. That place and the artists were way ahead of their time and sure the term 'punk' had been used in conjunction to music since the 1960's – CBGB'S established the punk scene as we now know it...it literally was the House of rising Punk . Filled with great footage and interviews, this documentary tells the story from the beginning. Richard Hell starts by telling the story of how he left his Kentucky home at age 17 with \$100 in his pocket to go to New York City to become a poet – Tom Verlaine followed suit a couple years later to do the same and that was the instinctive spark that helped set the entire scene ablaze. Patti Smith stated that New York was freedom, if you didn't fit in anywhere else – you fitted in NYC. There's was lots of 'camaraderial energy' and the poetry eventually transformed into music with Television and the Patti Smith Group with Lenny Kaye interpreting Patti's poems musically, they 'evolved with joyful abandon and innocence, making it up as we went along'- it was an extremely exciting time but there was one problem...a huge problem...there was nowhere to play. No prizes for guessing where the scene found a home...GBGB's of course, run by Hilly Kristal, it was a biker hangout and these early punk bands started paying every Sunday night with higher attendance with each show all by word of mouth...a scene was truly developing and progressing. Legs Mcneal talks about the Palace Hotel above CB's which was a bum hotel where the bands could stay...all the white people were moving away from the city and into the suburbs and their kids were doing the opposite, these were kids who grew up bored in the suburbs and need the thrill of the dirty city, as Legs states 'it was their parents' dream and their nightmare. So a scene was truly developing and it was the mirror opposite of the rock 'n' roll scene at the time that was becoming so far removed from real life with bands playing 50,000 seater stadiums and travelling in limos and jets...these young punks had nothing in common with that overblown bullshit, this was street-level rock 'n' roll, gritty, unpredictable, young and very, very exciting. This is the scene that killed off that exaggerated and pompous shit – as Iggy Pop says 'I think I helped wipe out the '60's'. More bands were forming around the scene and each with a very distinctive style and sound: The New York Dolls, it was far from acceptable to look the way they did back then, they were instantly labelled 'fags' – sure a million bands gained success from that look years down the line, but at that time this had never been done before, this was very offensive and confrontational and as Dee Dee Ramones says, many bands tried to re-created the Dolls when they broke up but no one ever came close. Then there were Blondie with their own melodic and poppy yet aggressive style, Wayne County with his own brand of sexual punk rock 'n' roll, the Talking Heads, Suicide and of course the Ramones – the very band that became the definition of the American punk rock sound, this was a band that was bare-bones punk rock. No poetry, no artiness- just 100% blaring punk. There's a line on this from Dee Dee that's one of the best things I've ever heard: 'I didn't know what a verso or chorus was until about 1983 or 1984'...that is just fantastic!

Also part of the early NY punk scene were the films made by Jim Jarmusch and Amos Poe as well as Andy Warhol's influence on the scene through his earlier work with the Velvet Underground so the New York scene at the time encompassed poetry, film, art and music...what a prosperous scene it was that has not been mirrored anywhere else since, even the early LA scene was nothing like this.

This is a fantastic recollection of that early scene and you can really see how exciting and impulsive it was- these were just kids who didn't really know what they were doing or what they were going to do next...it was all new to them and little did they know that they were creating the most important and volatile scene in musical history.

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