

BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE DECEMBER 12, 2004

Music DVD | JIM SULLIVAN



The Dead Boys are brought to life

The Dead Boys were America's Sex Pistols — sans politics, popularity, and media buzz. The quintet made noise in 1977, when punk rock was anathema to most American rock music fans. Too crude, too rude, too nasty. So the Dead Boys, fronted by an Iggy Pop devotee who went by the name of Stiv Bators, played dungeons like the Rat in Boston, where I saw them around that time, and CBGB in New York, ground zero for punk. Rod Swenson, who later came to infamy managing the Plasmatics, had three cameras and a few mikes in CBGB one night to videotape the Boys. Sometimes the power failed, other times the tubes blew out. Regardless, the 45-minute concert has now come out on a DVD called "**Dead Boys — Live! At CBGB 1977.**" An artful piece of work it's not, but it does capture a moment in time. The Dead Boys wrote a handful of great songs ("All This and More," "Sonic Reducer," "Ain't Nothin' to Do") that were full of anger and loathing — self- and otherwise. Bators saw a concert as an opportunity to crawl around the stage like an insect or cut his chest with some broken glass. It was a display of nihilism that, perversely enough, felt cathartic and just right, capturing the frustration of an early generation of punks before the music became codified and commodified. As guitarist Cheetah Chrome says in the bonus interview segment: "What we're doing onstage — just releasing a lot of energy, frustration . . . it's aggressive 'cause we don't like a lot of things."

Extras: Band interviews, promotional clip. (MVD, \$14.95)