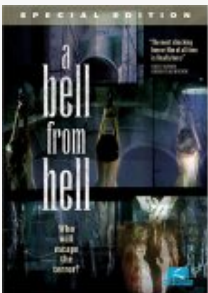


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DEAD BOYS - Live at CBGB's 1977

[Music Video Distributors](#) // Unrated // \$14.95 // November 30, 2004Review by [Carl Davis](#) | posted March 7, 2005 | [E-mail the Author](#) | [Start a Discussion](#)

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It's truly eye-opening to be reviewing **Dead Boys: Live! At CBGB 1977** at a time when the club it was shot in, one of the most seminal and famous clubs of all time, CBGB, finds itself in dire financial straights and faces the very real danger of moving, or even worse, closing. Hilly Kristal, the owner/operator of CBGB since the club's opening has gone public with his predicament, as the Bowery area of New York's downtown area becomes more gentrified, the club's rent is climbing at an astronomical rate. Once housed beneath a skid row flophouse, Kristal's punk rock Mecca now finds itself trying to compete with bigger, flashier, more modern venues. Kristal, one time manager and mentor to the Dead Boys, features prominently in the extras included on this disc. Coming from Kristal, someone having experience in the industry, it's a testament to the volatility of the times when even he was unable to keep the Dead Boys together through a falling out with their label.

Ironically, the Dead Boys, one of the New York punk scenes wildest fixtures, weren't even from the Big Apple. Most of them hailed from Cleveland, jettisoned from another seminal band, Rocket from the Tomb, who split up into both The Bead Boys and Pere Ubu. 1977 was probably the biggest year for Punk Rock, so it should be no surprise that 60 Minutes own Mike Wallace should try to cover this new phenomenon. Contacting Kristal, whose CBGB club was ground zero of the New York scene, a request was made to do a three camera video shoot of a band performing at the venue. As Kristal was their manager, he made sure the Dead Boys were the focus of the special report. For a punk band to receive this kind of treatment was very rare at the time, and as such, there are few truly great concert videos to capture this time period.

Even more remarkable is the condition these tapes are in, for even with the required touch ups by Music Video Distributors, the technical aspect to these recordings is great. Possibly the biggest bonus to this DVD is having the sound remixed into a 5.1 channel mix for maximum punch. As for the finished "60 Minutes" piece, I'm not sure if it ever saw the light of day, rather, an interesting Sire Records promotional clip included with the Extras uses some of the footage to promote the Dead

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Boys as “the most powerful form of rock ritual since ‘Beatlemania’.” While that may have been the case, the band’s legacy was cut short after their second studio album, “We Have Come for Your Children” failed to dent the billboard charts and they walked away from their recording contract, basically imploding from the constant attention, high expectations and low commercial payout.

Upon taking the stage, the band launch into their biggest hit, “Sonic Reducer,” which everyone I hope is familiar with, as it is probably one of the top ten punk anthems of that era. The band is amazingly tight, regardless of Bators “Iggy-esque” contortions, and just rock the crowd. Having not listened to “Young , Loud and Snotty” for a few years, I had forgotten how amazing “All This and More” is as a song and a statement, almost rivaling “Sonic Reducer,” but not quite as iconic. Rather, “All This and More” is the Dead Boys namesake song, as the refrain goes “I’m just a dead boy. You know that I’m just a dead boy,” and the song reaches critical mass as the audience joins in for a sing-along.

The rest of the Dead Boys set is just as explosive. Stiv Bators is hypnotic in his gyrations, but regardless of his playing to the cameras or not, Bators’ presence on stage is palpable. Whether he’s absent-mindedly blowing his bleeding nose on some lunchmeat, chewing up and then spraying the crowd with the aforementioned meal during a verse, scraping a piece of wadded up gum from CB’s floor and chewing on it for a bit, or any number of spills, stumbles, falls or self-induced seizures on the stage, Bators moves appear fluid and calculated. By the time they reach the finale, a fast and loose version of the Stogge’s “Search and Destroy,” the Dead Boys have already proven a dozen times over that they were the real thing, with a short, fast legacy no less groundbreaking and important than The Ramones, The Clash or even the Sex Pistols.

The songs included on this disc are:

Sonic Reducer
 All This and More
 Not Anymore
 Revenge
 Flame Thrower Love
 I Need Lunch
 Ain’t Nothin’ to Do
 What Love Is
 High Tension Wire
 Search & Destroy

The DVD:

Picture: **Dead Boys: Live! At CBGB 1977** is presented, no surprise as it was shot for TV, in a Full Screen Format. What is surprising, considering the age and condition of the source material, is just how good this concert looks. Or to be precise, it looks exactly the way you’d think a concert like this would look. It’s dirty, grimy, skuzzy and truly captures this moment in history as if you were there.

Audio: **Dead Boys: Live! At CBGB 1977** both a Dolby Digital 2.0 stereo track and a Dolby Digital 5.1 surround track, which really elevates this performance and gives it the extra punch needed to bring this Dead Boys experience home.



Extras: Music Video Distributors have really outdone themselves, putting together a great set of extras that help to put this rare taped performance in a historical context. That these 1977 interviews with the band have survived is amazing enough, but the new interviews that MVD conducted with Cheetah Chrome (real name, Eugene Richard O'Connor) and former manager Hilly Kristal, as well as other incidentals (promotional clip, Steel Tips performance), make the extras on this DVD as important as the performance itself. I mean, just to hear Stiv Bators name his influences as "New York Dolls... The Stooges... Paul Revere and the Raiders" is just priceless.

Conclusion: Before the release of **Dead Boys: Live! At CBGB 1977**, the only way you could experience the Dead Boys in all their glory would have been to have seen them back in the day, but thanks to this unearthed relic of a bygone age, the Dead Boys live on. It's a must-see for anyone with even a passing interest in Punk Music or the "hey-day" of the New York Punk scene back in the mid to late 70's. Those weaned on the current crop of watered down punk-pop poseurs may not "get" what makes this performance so incredible, but the mere fact that this DVD is coming out now is reason enough to seek out where that type of music began, and try to save the legacy of Punk. Save CBGB, it's the only one we've got!

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