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The Final Quarrel

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- [Event Reviews](#)
- [Features](#)
- [Interviews](#)
- [Music Reviews](#)
- [Print Reviews](#)
- [Screen Reviews](#)

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- [Legendary Albums Live: Heart](#)
- [Head Case](#)
- [Nine Inch Nails Live: Beside You In Time](#)
- [Mel Lewis and His Big Band](#)
- [The Final Quarrel: Live at CBGBs 2001](#)

x-Reference

- [Agnostic Front](#)
- [Youth of Today](#)
- [Harley's War](#)
- [Wargasm](#)
- [SSD](#)
- [Uniform Choice](#)
- [Nuclear Assault](#)

The Final Quarrel: Live at CBGBs 2001

starring [Cro-Mags](#)

MVD Media

The Age of Quarrel, The Cro-Mags' 1986 debut album, was a revelation. At the time, hardcore was accelerating into DRI-inspired thrash and metal was seen as the ultimate sell-out. It didn't help that as a number of the original hardcore bands grew up and learned how to really play their instruments, they turned out some of the lamest, most uninspired hard rock ever recorded (although in retrospect, SSD's *How We Rock* is pretty good, as is that U2 album *Uniform Choice* would put out a few years later). Leave it to a bunch of scary New York Krishna devotees to meld the power of metal and the fury of hardcore into a mix so potent, the real question was why nobody did it earlier.



The Cro-Mags never really got as big as they deserved to be, possibly due to frequent lineup shifts, breakups, and subsequent albums that were deemed too metal by punks, and too punk by metalheads. Bassist/vocalist Harley Flanagan has remained a constant through the changes, and is (I believe) the only original member of the band he founded, the band that wrote the blueprint for post-85 hardcore. The Cro-Mags were one of the last bands to play CBGBs before it closed, an event documented in *The Final Quarrel*. Whatever version of the band, Harley has assembled blazes through pretty much all of *The Age of Quarrel*, as well as a few covers. Plus, the band

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hits the stage to the theme from *Conan the Barbarian*. How awesome is that?

While the DVD packaging says this is a multi-camera shoot, I swear there is only one shot throughout, which appears to be from about the third row off the stage. It's a muddy mix that robs the performance of power, and the whole thing is reminiscent of those bootleg videos you used to be able to order from the back of *Maximum Rock and Roll*. The audio and video are markedly improved on the full set from *Harley's War*, a New York hardcore super group that performs a lot of the early Cro-Mags stuff. There is also a short interview with Flanagan, where he walks through the soon-to-be closed CBGBs reminiscing (he had been going there since he was like seven). But annoying editing gets in the way and it's a shame because, as seen in the *American Hardcore* documentary, Flanagan can be an interesting interview (in fact, I believe he was the only one who attempted to explain what the music meant to him or sounded like).

It really is too bad that the Cro-Mags stuff didn't come out cleaner, because the recently released *Bad Brains* show from 20 years earlier is miles better. Fans will be happy to see the band go through their best album one last time, but curious non-fans would be better off tracking down a copy of *The Age of Quarrel*.

MVD: mvd2b.com

Scott Adams

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