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ONLINE MUSIC MAGAZINE

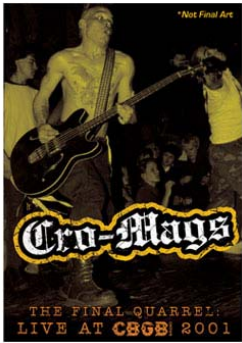
The music revolution is re-ignited now...

- Left of the Dial Magazine

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[Cro-Mags/The Final Quarrel, Live at CBGBs 2001, DVD: MVD](#)

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Ah, I avidly recall the days when the Cro-Mags were featured in Spin and their video “We Gotta Know” burned like a graven image into viewer’s heads as it spilled images of their Motorhead tour, all while invading the tepid space of college rock oriented 120 Minutes at the same time as Bad Brains, Blast, and Gang Green! This documentary may not be as historically trenchant as the Bad Brains video at CBGBs, nor shot as close and tight, nonetheless this is a louder than a testosterone missile, capturing the rambunctious, tightly wound, and irascible band and their “c’mon motherfuckers” East Village exhortations. In doing so, it indexes the mid-1980’s NY hardcore in the last true chunk of what Harley Flannigan describes as “old New York,” where he seemed to be raised by wolves. Well, not really, but Harley practically had an umbilical chord linked to the club, having seen his first show (The Wolverines) there in 1974 and playing his first show with the Stimulators there

in 1979. The Cro-Mags show is cramped-looking, but if you actually ever saw CBGB’s stage, it wasn’t Caesar’s Palace, but a black box in an underground bunker shell-shocked by years of noise and stickers. Yet, there’s just enough room for singer John John to bobble up and down and dart endlessly like a voracious python, a force of nature himself, as Flannigan muscles his way round the elbow-lined space, despite carrying that monster bass.

Meanwhile, the other fellows are stoic and drilled, not unlike the shaggy fellows raking rhythm behind Angus in AC/DC. The sound is mostly rich and well-mixed; however, the camera feels stationary, as if bound to a tripod, so the angles mostly just sweep back and forth across the stage from a point fixed in the audience. Still, the set is blistering fast, almost overly so, so much you might actually prefer the Harley’s War, including a chunk of Cro-Mags covers, which are a little closer to the classic form. One bonus includes Harley getting his guitars signed by the man-behind-the-music, Hilly Kristal, the owner of CBGBs, and talking his way through four decades of Bowery memories. In doing so, he comes off as mega-rooted, likeable, and long-engaged with a community that has often been hyped, and often misunderstood, by outsiders. In all, it’s a gritty slice of an era now placed in the dustbin of history.

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