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"A sinister cabal of superior writers."

Music Review: Harley's War - Hardcore All Stars



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Author: Greg Barbrick — Published: Nov 10, 2009 at 7:07 pm

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"Cro-Mags was the perfect name, because as advanced as man has become, we're still just primitive beings. It's still all about the power, and control." -Harley Flanagan

If anybody should know about power and control in music, it is New York hardcore legend Harley Flanagan, a founding member of the Cro-Mags. Their 1986 debut *The Age Of Quarrel* was an instant classic, with songs such as "Don't Tread On Me," "Show You No Mercy," and "Signs Of The Times."

The title was apt, as Cro-Mags were a band whose lineup was in a constant state of flux. By the time their second record *Best Wishes* came out in 1989, original singer John Joseph had split, leaving Flanagan to take on vocal duties.

Best Wishes was another huge step forward for the hardcore genre. It was one of the first records to meld hardcore and metal, a style that later came to be known as thrash. Since then, the band has undergone too many permutations to count. At times there would be a version of the Cro-Mags led by Joseph out on tour at the same time as one fronted by Flanagan. *The Age Of Quarrel* never seems to end I guess.

Apparently Flanagan got tired of all the legal BS, and started calling his band Harley's War. Their recent *Hardcore All-Stars* release is exactly what it says it is. Harley has drafted members of Bad Brains, Warzone, Suicidal Tendencies, and Agnostic Front to help out, and they have come up with a pretty powerful set of tunes.

First of all, this CD/DVD contains one hell of a lot of material. There is the basic 12 song album, four demos from 1982, and a full 16 track set from CBGBs, apparently recorded sometime in the late '80s.

The heart of this set is the first 12 songs, which seem to be autobiographical in nature. It may be that Flanagan is taking a look back on his history, now that he is a parent. In any event, songs like "Scarred For Life," and "Who Survived" definitely contain a bit of soul-searching for this proud skinhead. In addition, the CBGB show smokes, and includes nearly every song off *The Age Of Quarrel*.

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Article Author: [Greg Barbrick](#)






Greg Barbrick is an old time "music biz" groupie/writer. He thinks that nothing good has been recorded since 1978.

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