

# Edinburgh International Book Festival – Viv Albertine with Ian Rankin



*Words and Music: Memoirs of a Punk Rocker at the Edinburgh International Book Festival*

With an outstanding memoir out this year, it was no surprise to witness a packed out Bailie Gifford Hall, sold out to see former Slits girl, rock and roll feminist Viv Albertine, being interviewed by Edinburgh's music encyclopaedia, Ian Rankin.

Having published several music biographies since last year's book festival, Rankin has carved out a lovely role for himself this year that involves interviewing the likes of Edwyn Collins, Viv and Stuart David (of Belle & Sebastian fame).

Using his never-ending fan-boy knowledge on the subject Ian Rankin prompts Albertine with a great deal of questions which the audience did not know they would like answered.

Albertine's biography published by Faber & Faber was widely regarded as more than a punk memoir, a wonderful insight into her rebel pride, less grandiose than those of her peers it seems. As such, she was able to capture the audience, alluding to a grounded persona and defiant, unbeatable determination.

"That's my insides made visual!" was her reaction to Patti Smith's *Horses*, the androgyny of Smith. She alluded to being just as androgynous as the prolific punk, Smith. Her history includes dating Mick Jones, attending Chelsea School of Art, The Clash, The Sex Pistols, and film directing, Albertine, blatantly an expressive artist, kept the audience gawping at her achievements and ordeals.

Rankin's ability to thread anecdotes did not go unnoticed as he was able to engage with the musician, linking her to biographical accounts, goading her to extol her own achievements and doings. His questions kept the interview on track and were insightful, paving the way for Albertine to highlight her feminism and her formidable dealings with cervical cancer.

There was mention of Jody Linscott from Kokomo being a key inspiration for getting into music, saying she was someone who picked up a guitar and started playing.

Sid Vicious playing saxophone surprisingly made it into her account, certainly not an image that most of the crowd could conjure, but one which outlined Albertine's humorous nostalgia. These were just a couple of examples of the rich storytelling, which the book festival had encouraged with this stimulating event.

***Clothes, Clothes, Clothes. Music, Music, Music. Boys, Boys, Boys***, by **Viv Albertine** is published by Faber & Faber and is available from bookshops and online.

*Photo courtesy of The Edinburgh International Book Festival  
Helen Jones*

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