

# The Damned live at Barrowlands

**The Damned are not talked about with the same reverence as the Sex Pistols and the Clash but are just as vital.**

As punk limbers up to celebrate its 50th anniversary perhaps the Damned will be given some rightful acclaim. The line-up is their classic 1980s four-piece along with keyboardist Monty Oxymoron. Drummer Rat Scabies returns after a long exile, along with bass player Paul Gray, they are the essential engine room of the band.

Front-man Dave Vanian, part punk and part goth helped pave the way for frontmen such as Depeche Mode's Dave Gahan in look, style and tone. He moves around the stage delivering some rubber-legged Elvis moves while pointing at the Barrowlands stars like a pre-Beatles 1950s British rock n' roll hero. Captain Sensible poses for photographers then finger swears before striking the essential riff to Love Song over Grey's rumbling red Rickenbacker. The pair of them point their guitars like ammunition before going into Machine Gun Etiquette, while it summons something of Iggy and The Stooges you can hear the influence on early Guns N' Roses, especially their 1986 release Live ?!\*@ Like a Suicide. By that stage, the Damned had moved onto another genre shift and scored a hit with a cover of Barry Ryan's Eloise. Tonight it fits the set like Vanian's black gloves.

Captain Sensible takes over on lead vocals for Life Goes On and points to its influence on Nirvana's Come As You Are. He

also rewrites another historic wrong when suggesting Killing Joke also ripped him off with Eighties. The Invisible Man reminds us it's not all about the past and the 2023 track recreates the lost art of the novelty single. New Rose, the first punk 45 released in October 1976, has lost none of its melodic power and fury. Vanian in sunglasses, shimmies at the front of the stage as Rat Scabies delivers his melodic drum fills.

"The rat is back announced" Captain Sensible leaving the stage with a "Ho Ho" paving the way for the Christmas punk rock classic There Ain't No Sanity Clause. A storming final encore of Smash It Up was a thrilling end to a phenomenal night's entertainment. The sheer undiluted power of these four uncompromising musicians onstage is a sight to behold.



Photo Richard Purden



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