



Photo by Erich Boekelheide

Punk rock

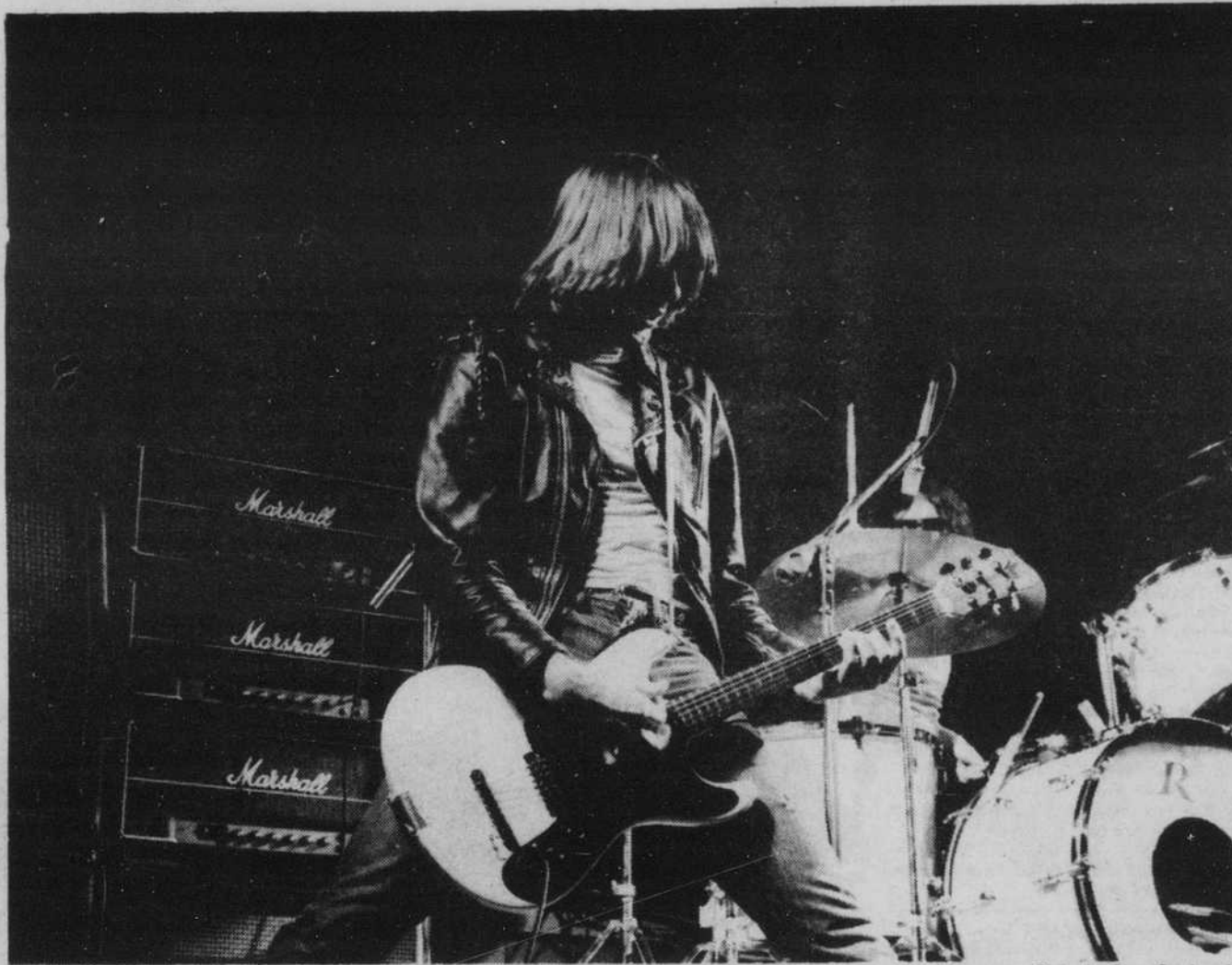


Photo by Greg Gawlowski

Ramones' antics draw gyrating fans

By JOCK HATFIELD
Of the Emerald

They stood on the church altar grinding and screeching. "Gonna take a chance on her. One built in the cylinder. And in a moment of passion, get the glory like Charles Manson. Gonna smile, I'm gonna laugh...."

It's teeth-grinding music, muscle-flexing music. To the listeners it feels good, real good. Like throwing a rock through a stained glass window. Like stepping on an ant hill. Breaking the chains.

Punk rock. Most of the ticket holders for last week's concert had not expected to find the

Ramones in a church. Somehow punk rock and church didn't go together. The fans went cruising around the fairgrounds by the dozens looking for something that remotely resembled a Ramone.

"What's in there?"
"Nothing but boats with sails and fat people."

Finally they found their Ramones in the Willamette Christian Center turned civic auditorium, among church bulletins and apocryphal memos — "Let Bethel open the word of God for you."

"God bless America."
The speakers piled on the pulpit preached. "He jumped down, he knocked her off her feet. And then I knew it was the end of her." The singer drew the microphone toward his waist, down, down toward his exposed bony knees in a long epileptic motion. "He's going to kill that girl. He's going to kill that girl."

The Ramones had a little trouble bringing down their flag. A big black tarp reading "Hey, ho, let's

go" was supposed to unravel dramatically as they made their entrance. But it got hung up in the church rafters and bobbed around overhead, an evil bedspread "He's going to kill that girl... kill that girl." The sound echoed back and forth across the church like a superball thrown in a closet. Anger, anger, what fun! Some moved to the front of the church and gyrated and jostled. The singer shook his fist. The dancers shook back. "Ya, ya, ya, ya!"
"Ya, ya, ya, ya!"

For three and a half years, punk rock has been moving across the country like a fingernail across a blackboard. The Ramones claim to be its originators. They started as a group in New York, playing in clubs.

"It took a while for us to catch on," says a Ramone. "We started in small places and moved up." Now they draw capacity crowds at most concerts.

But they had never played Eugene before and only about 100 fans turned out, not counting those who ended up at the boat show. The Ramones manager was unfazed. "We're trying to break in new ground." Punk rock is a cultivated taste.

"Gimme, gimme shock treatment," screamed the Ramones. "Peace and love is here to stay."

The crowd was varied. Some came to spectate. Others were leather-upholstered fans, wearing deputy badges and grins.

"I'm just a punk rock aficionado."

"It's the energy!"
"Ya get tired of hearing the Doobie Brothers' 'everything's going great' shit."

Soft red light to brazen white light. Soft beat to noise. All a frontal assault on the sense. The audience did not fight or attack. "That's a media hype," says the Ramones.

But there was a feeling, a feeling like ripping the hair out of your companion would be a good idea. Teeth gritted and flaccid stomachs grew hard beneath soft

shirts.

"You don't know what I can do with this ax," sang the Ramones. "Chop off your head, so you better relax."

Let Bethel open the word of God...

"I'm gonna laugh, you're gonna get a blood bath," sang the Ramones. "Ya, ya, ya, ya."

God Bless America.

Some got up and walked out. "It gets old." Others moved to the front. One couple dragged their kid up. He looked a little worried. They gyrated. Rage against the noise. Do not go gentle....

"He jumped down, he knocked her off her feet. That's when I knew it was the end of her. Hey."

Joey Ramone lounged on the flowered bedspread of the Ramone's motel room, a desolate place sandwiched between Mr. Steak and Sambo's.

"Everyone is trying to analyze what punk rock is all about, — they miss the point," he said. "It's for a good time. It's not to be taken seriously." His arms twitched and darted about, snakes looking for a hole.

"It's different than English punk. English punk has more to do with social conditions." They were dressed in holey jeans, leather coats and spiked metal belts. Evil adolescents.

"Our roots? Our roots are in rock and roll. All of it. Our roots are in ourselves." This makes weeding more convenient.

Punk rock can't be classified, say the Ramones. It varies from group to group: Pattie Smith, the Sex Pistols, Television. This week the Talking Heads and Elvis Costello will try punk rock on Eugene again.

The crowd, canned at first by the church, started loosening up. The music cracked them from their seats. More moved up front. Loose, loose.

"Suzy is a headbanger. Her mother is a geek. Do it one more time for me Oooo-ooo-wheel!"
Amen.

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