

PUNK: Animal, Vegetable or Mineral.

The most misleading aspect of New Wave is that given by Rock Skins trying to write the definition of an article about



The Damned Rat Scabies, Brian James, Dave Vanian and Captain Sensible

Rock at Razor's Edge

While punk rock has undoubtedly been accepted as part of a reaction against the mechanical discipline of disco music, its importance lies in its emergence as a marketable fashion. Its password is a surrender to primalism. But this could be the early '60s: the music is once more outrageous, but it's also antagonistic, creating its own tension, dividing, sometimes conquering. And the kids are excited. The battles between the Mods and the

Teds could break out again tomorrow — Punks versus Rockers.

The music itself isn't really important. The music is only that of its audience — who are aggressive, self-conscious and who feel victimised. Its intention is to shock and to alienate those outside its devotees, which makes its following all the stronger. The music is minimal, with little but the titles to distinguish one song from another. The vocals are mostly inaudible but the sketch of each song is left faintly traced under the layers of sound. It's rock stripped to its raw essence, the energy and excitement left bare. The only important part of the music is the attitude. And the attitude is one of anger, frustration and desperation — a total despair that can find no purpose other than itself, that can do no more than scream out for everyone to hear.

Most of the bands to play London's original punk rock venue, the Roxy, sounded much the same and, on the evidence of the live album *The Roxy London WC2 (Jan-Apr 77)*, all that separates a band like Wire from the Sex Pistols is good management. In most of the new punk groups the musicians' ages range between 14 and early 20, though Eater averages out at 15 years. But, as with all bandwagons, there are some here who look out of place and some musicians who've come around for a second or third try at the business.

But that by no means invalidates the music. Just as it doesn't matter that most of the punk rock vocalists never escape a monotone and manage a three note range at best, that the

guitars are way too rough for the chords to be distinguishable. And, because the punk rock movement is overly anarchic, the ultimate achievement has to be that of the Unwanted on the live Roxy album. The Unwanted then known as Smak — were playing their first gig and had only been playing together for a week.

Of course it can't last and I don't think anybody's expecting it to. It may have already ended — after all it has been hard to take the Sex Pistols seriously since they originally signed to EMI for 40,000 pounds.

£40,000 so what!

Nobody mentions that the record companies' stranglehold on youth culture may well have been weakened were the punks refuse to record, carrying on playing the clubs instead. And once the Sex Pistols had been signed to a major company, every record company was looking to sign any punk rock group.

While some bands, like the Damned, signed to independent or privately-owned labels, it's becoming apparent that commercialism is already taking

who wants to be a cunt

the guts away from the music. It's happened before of course and, just as then, the record companies are getting rich on the anger of youth; an

anger directed at all the record companies represent.

It would be hard to understand why the Sex Pistols signed a recording contract in the first place were it not for all the dictum of nihilism: nothing really matters at all. And, besides, I'm sure they gave EMI and A & M a good time.

The punk rockers have vitalised an otherwise jaded music scene but what's most interesting now is to see what will follow. The Ramones are playing faster (17 songs in half an hour), the Clash are said to be improving, the Sex Pistols are currently forced to play under a different name because of their reputation for inciting violence. The professed amateurism that separates the punks from the New

it's not virtuosity it's ENERGY!

Wave groups holds punk rock in embryo, but it must eventually develop — if not progress. And some of the more exciting groups loosely enveloped by the punk movement — the Jam, Johnny Thunders and the Heartbreakers among a few others — look fit to go on to better things.

In many ways we're right back at the beginning, still waiting for the next Beatles. Not that that really matters.

Jeremy Templar.

only sucker could believe this sort of hype

Don't believe in hippies
Don't believe in Reds,
I prefer Rockers in
the Teds

Only drummer
EE Genkoate is 15
you sensationalist Man Bar
NZ ROPS

Suburban Reptiles



Back Row: Buster Stiggs, Zero and Jimmy Vinyl. Front Row: Billy Planet and Johnny Volume.

Reptilian Talk

Rip It Up, culls subjective info from the Suburban Reptiles. Zero, Jimmy Vinyl, Billy Planet, Johnny Volume, and Buster Stiggs. Interviewed by none other than Jilly Tweeter.

Rip It Up: A lot of people lump Television, The Damned, the Stranglers and Eddie and the Hot Rods together and call it punk, maybe New Wave. Are they right?

Buster: Na. Shit no. Animal, vegetable and mineral.

Jimmy: Eddie and the Hot Rods are revivalist, Television's sort of New York slow stuff, the Stranglers are shit and the Damned are ... neat. People think these groups are the same 'cause that's what they've been told by the radio stations.

Rip It Up: Well, punk and New Wave; is there any difference?

Billy: Well, I suppose punk is New Wave, isn't it? But New Wave isn't punk.

Zero: Punk's more the really rough stuff. The Ramones are punk. New Wave encompasses people like Iggy Pop and Patty Smith. They've been around a while but they're starting new material.

Jimmy: Stuff like Ultravox too which

isn't punk really but still new wave. It's all a matter of definition really, which is difficult apart from naming the bands.

Billy: I don't know; the Sunday News seems to know what punk is.

Zero: ..because of the media there are too many connotations on the word punk. Associations with razor blades, vomiting etc.

Rip It Up: Then you don't like the way the media handles it?

Jimmy: TEENAGE SHOCK.

Zero: All the time you're asked "Why don't you swear more on stage?" or "Do you vomit on stage?" and "If not, why not?"

Billy: You know people ask if the music stands up on its own. I don't think it does.

Zero: I do.

Jimmy: I do.

Both are dismissed by the priest.

Billy: Yeah, but its different from anything that's been happening in the last ten years. That's one of the things that makes it what it is. So it's more than just music.

Rip It Up: There's a lot of mud thrown by groups like the Pistols etc. at the big acts that enjoy 'continuing' success. Do you agree with them?

Zero: To a certain extent. People like Elton John, Rod Stewart. The big names ... I don't like their music. I get really irritated when they keep churning out the same self-indulgent stuff. Like Chicago where they've got 14 or 15 albums and it all sounds the same.

Billy: Yeah, it's like I hate Woodstock. This term 'blank generation' seems so appropriate. People just don't know how to react. It seems all they've got to relate to is Woodstock. Like those Albert Park concerts ... people just sit there embarrassed and think it's a Woodstock. They're really blank. I mean a place like Wellington. Hippies everywhere. Still all tassles and beads. I mean in '69-'70 it was all hippies and they were just followers. I mean this is the whole thing about ****in' hippies; they're just so ****in' weak you know. I mean hippies are happening now. People are starting to wear razor blades cause it's hip — they're just ****in' hippies again. In the early 60's there was a real intensity but then it just got hip to grow your hair and just sort of ... you know bloody hippies.

Mike Chunn

After Me The Savage God

Wellington will not forget the punks for some time. As ambassadors of the "new wave" they certainly got a reaction. Aesthetic objections aside however, the punks may have something to offer. Watching the "Wizard" whirl to "Anarchy in the UK", the conflict between the sixties and seventies was never more apparent. Whether we like it or not the punks are 1977.

We went to watch the Scavengers on the Tuesday. Using two guitarists, drummer and lead singer, the band makes a sound like a sawmill. The rhythms were basic and the songs short. No, they can't play for pussy and the poses they struck were derivative. But their energy was true and refreshing.

Watching "Living Sailor" and "Hello Ragnarok" at the Town Hall the same night, I saw paraded a tired, obsolete science, "an old bitch gone in the teeth". Then I appreciated the mission of the punks.

Wednesday night did get a little out of hand. The Suburban Reptiles al-

most had a riot on their hands. Yet, as with most of the "new wave" bands, the bravado and aggression is purely style.

The Reptiles had the build-up but they fluffed musically. A female singer in a band like this is not a good idea. Especially if she can't sing. And the saxophonist was worse than David Bowie.

Buster Stiggs spat out the required amount of venom, but over reached himself in his indiscriminate hurling of that drumstick.

Punks are, in theory, unemployed, working-class youth, "fed-up with the strictures of an urban environment". The irony is, of course, that none of our Auckland friends have ever been, nor ever will be hungry.

Last Wednesday the Reptiles angst was papier-mache. Theirs was a cold-blooded performance.

Punk rock is, I think, something of a consequence. But it needs to keep a sharp eye on its own direction.

Redmer Yska