

# Ramones are a big influence

by Michael [unclear]

1 - 2 - 3 - 4!!  
 Now I wanna sniff some glue  
 Now I wanna have something to do  
 All the kids wanna sniff some glue  
 All the kids wanna have something to do.  
 ("Now I Wanna Sniff Some Glue" from **Ramones**)

That's the Ramones; loud, fast, fun, cheap and great. In America it was the Ramones who single-handedly turned rock and roll around, gave it guts, passion and purity in an era when rock and roll almost died out. The Ramones have influenced countless bands including every significant group to come out of the punk movement (even the first punks, the Sex Pistols). With original three cord songs that are fresh and explosive, and lyrics that are the most mundane and funny yet fundamentally honest and serious, the Ramones, along with the Sex Pistols, have created the most inspired rock and roll since Elvis Presley.

Quite unfortunately, the majority of the rock public has become completely blind to the importance of the Ramones, labeling them stupid, incompetent and dumb. The last thing the Ramones are is dumb. Only

an ignorant audience would dismiss their honest intelligence, yet flock in myriads to something truly wretched like AC DC. For the serious rock listener to ignore the energy of the Ramones (or the Clash, or Sex Pistols for that matter) is like missing the whole point of rock and roll.

The Ramones have recently released their sixth album, **Pleasant Dreams**, and after three weeks on the North Amer-

ican charts it has climbed to number 26. Hopefully, this album will provide the long awaited financial freedom they've deserved. And the album is great, possibly as good as any album they've made to date. With their last album, **End of the Century**, the Ramones made a slight break from their basic sound by introducing more instruments, guitar solos, and a more produced and accessible sound. However, it

didn't work; the sound was forced and rarely spontaneous and Phil Spector's production was overdone. On the new album the sound is again more technically precise and cleaner but the fire of the Ramones is undiminished. Each song is pure TNT. The rock here is as hard as it always was and the energy never stops. Only the garage sound is missing but it doesn't matter. The rhythms are slightly different and a few off-

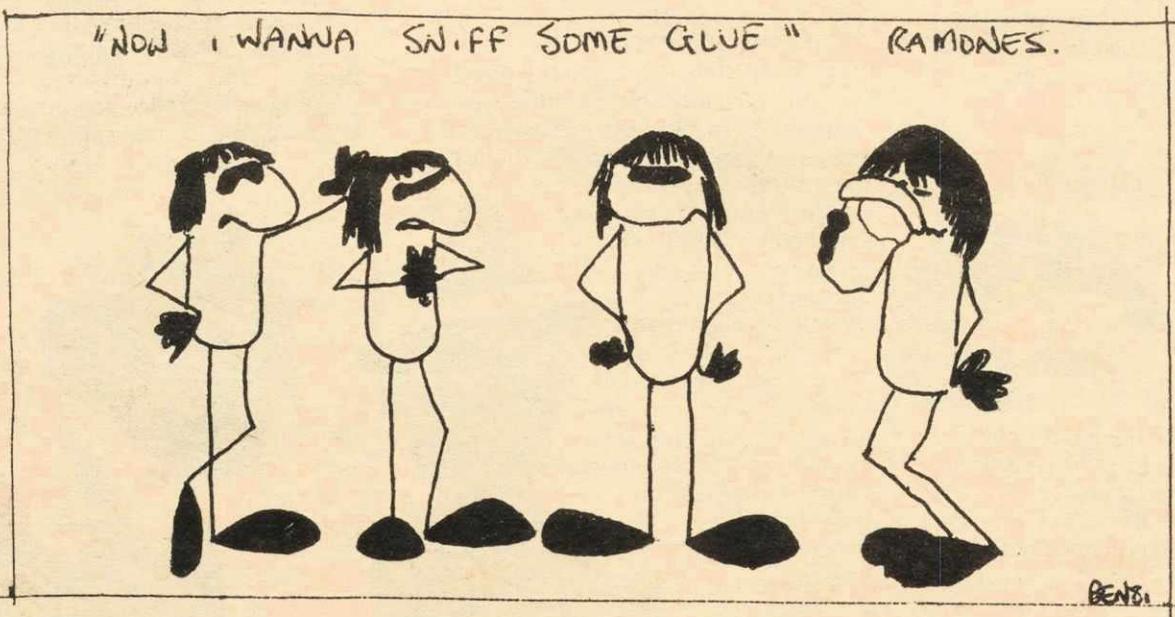
beats and organ fills are used, but always with taste.

The punctuated beat of "This Business is Killing Me" with its driving Little Richard-like keyboards, works wonders. It's a tribute to the road and Joey's singing is superb. "The KKK Took My Baby Away" has an infectious heavy beat and the lyrics are wonderfully funny in the wake of the overly serious mass concern over the Klu Klux Klan.

My favourite number, "All's Quiet on the Eastern Front," joyously exclaims the love the

Ramones have for their hometown New York City; "Stalking the streets till the break of day/New York beauty take my breath away." The driving sound is as good as anything they've done yet and Joey's "All right" brings back Iggy Pop with a raw power.

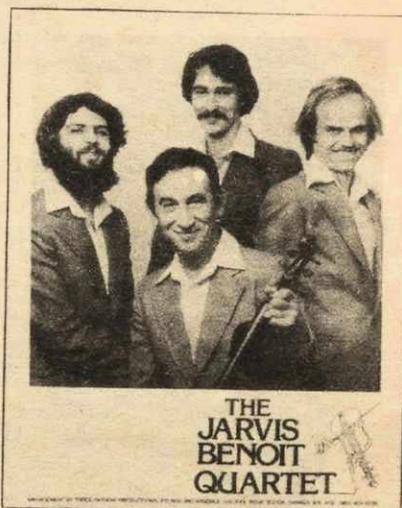
Every song has a gut spirit to it. There are Beach Boys melodies and Beatles riffs throughout, only the Ramones play them better. If you love rock and roll, buy this album; in fact buy any Ramones album you can lay your hands on. Are the Ramones the only band that matter? Of course!



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