Johnny Rotten: Punk's National Treasure [B2]

Cantante dei Sex Pistols, band dalla breve durata ma dalla grande influenza sulla musica popolare, con la sua attitudine nichilista ha scandalizzato la società britannica affermandosi come un'icona per i giovani della fine del XX secolo.

John Joseph Lydon, better known as Johnny **Rotten**, was the lead singer of the punk rock band the Sex Pistols from 1975 to 1978. He was the co-author of iconic punk singles such as Anarchy in the U.K. and God Save the Queen, and his group were one of the most influential in the history of pop music, scandalising the media and much of society. In recent years he has been called a "national treasure" – to his horror.

FROM COMA TO SHOP SEX

A nervous child, at age seven he contracted spinal meningitis, and spent seven months in a coma. He lost his memory for four years and did not recognise his parents. The meningitis gave him his famous, intimidating 'Lydon **stare**'. The original members of the Sex Pistols — **Rotten**, Steve Jones, Paul Cook and Glen Matlock (later **replaced** by Sid Vicious) — were

customers in Vivienne Westwood's fetish clothing shop SEX in London. Impresario Malcolm McLaren, Westwood's boyfriend, formed them into the group and chose **Rotten** as the lead singer.

ELECTRIFYING THE PUBLIC

The Sex Pistols released their first single, Anarchy in the U.K., in November 1976. Their second, the anti-royalist God Save the Queen, followed in May 1977. Five months later came their first and only LP, **Never Mind** the **Bollocks**. Here's the Sex Pistols. The **raw**, unsophisticated playing and aggressive lyrics electrified the public and shocked the establishment. The Sex Pistols **lasted** less than three years, but they would prove to be one of the most culturally influential bands in popular music. In a society based on deference and formality, they **sparked** a revolution in music, helping to introduce punk to a mass public. **Rotten** became a cult figure for the young, and his hostile, sarcastic singing led one journalist to describe him as "the biggest **threat** to our youth since Hitler."

END OF THE SEX PISTOLS

Facing incredible pressure from the media, and government **bans** limiting their concerts, the Sex Pistols **split up** in January 1978. **Rotten** then formed the post-punk group Public Image Ltd., which is still active. Now officially a celebrity, he appeared on the reality TV programme I'm a Celebrity … Get Me Out of Here! in 2004 (calling the viewers "fucking **cunts**" during one episode) and in **ads** for **butter** in 2008. He has also made wildlife documentaries.

INCENDIARY SINGER

According to one critic, Johnny **Rotten** was "one of the most incendiary rock singers ever to walk the earth." As the leader of the Sex Pistols, he became the representative for rebellious youth, while at the same time helping to shape the future landscape of pop music. In one of the strangest **tributes ever paid** to a musician, a journalist described **Rotten** as "an

inspiration to the musically **ungifted**, a walking advertisement for three-**chord** success."

JOHNNY GREENTEETH

There are two versions of how John Lydon got his **stage name** of Johnny **Rotten**. One version dates back to the early 1970s, when his **lack** of interest in oral hygiene led to his teeth turning green and people started calling him **Rotten** as a result. A second version is more specific but also relates to his terrible teeth. When the Sex Pistols guitarist Steve Jones first met Lydon, he took one look at his teeth and exclaimed, "You're rotten, you are!". Whatever the truth, in 2008 Lydon spent $22,000 on extensive dental work in Los Angeles.

Glossary

- **threat** = minaccia
- **ads** = annunci
- **butter** = burro
- **ungifted** = senza talento
- **replaced** = sostituire
- **bans** = divieti
- **Rotten** = putrefatto
- **Bollocks** = stupidaggini
- **split up** = separarsi
- **tributes ever paid** = rendere omaggio
- **lack** = mancanza
- **stage name** = nome d'arte
- **stare** = sguardo
- **Never Mind** = non importa
- **raw** = crudo
- **lasted** = durare
- **sparked** = provocare
- **cunts** = figli di p** (letteralmente vagine)
- **chord** = accordo