

= Ramones (album) =

Ramones is the debut studio album by the American punk rock band the Ramones , released on April 23 , 1976 by Sire Records . After Hit Parader editor Lisa Robinson saw the band at a gig in New York City , she wrote about them in an article and contacted Danny Fields , insisting he be their manager . Fields agreed and convinced Craig Leon to produce Ramones , and the band recorded a demo for prospective record labels . Leon persuaded Sire president Seymour Stein to listen to the band perform , and he later offered the band a recording contract . The Ramones began recording in January 1976 , needing only seven days and \$ 6 @, @ 400 to record the album . They used similar sound @-@ output techniques to those of the Beatles , and used advanced production methods by Leon .

The album cover , photographed by Punk magazine 's Roberta Bayley , features the four members leaning against a brick wall in New York City . The record company paid only \$ 125 for the front photo , which has since become one of the most imitated album covers of all time . The back cover depicts an eagle belt buckle along with the album 's liner notes . After its release , Ramones was promoted with two singles which failed to chart . The Ramones also began touring to help sell records ; these tour dates were mostly based in the United States , though two were booked in Britain .

Violence , drug use , relationship issues , humor , and Nazism were prominent in the album 's lyrics . The album opens with " Blitzkrieg Bop " , which is among the band 's most recognized songs . Most of the album 's tracks are uptempo , with many songs measuring at well over 160 beats per minute . The songs are also rather short ; at two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half minutes , " I Don 't Wanna Go Down to the Basement " is the album 's longest track . Ramones contains a cover of the Chris Montez song " Let 's Dance " .

Ramones peaked at No. 111 on the US Billboard 200 and was unsuccessful commercially ; initially it received mixed reviews from the few critics who wrote about it . However , many later deemed it a highly influential record , and it has since received many accolades , such as the top spot on Spin magazine 's list of the " 50 Most Essential Punk Records " . Ramones went on to inspire many bands like the Sex Pistols , the Buzzcocks , and the Clash , among others . Aside from sparking the punk @-@ rock scene in both the US and UK , it has had a significant impact on other genres of rock music , such as grunge and heavy metal . The album was certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of America in 2014 .

= = Background = =

The Ramones began playing gigs in mid @-@ 1974 , with their first show at Performance Studios in New York City . The band , performing in a style similar to the one used on their debut album , typically performed at clubs in downtown Manhattan , specifically CBGB and Max 's Kansas City . In early 1975 , Lisa Robinson , an editor of Hit Parader and Rock Scene , saw the fledgling Ramones performing at CBGB and subsequently wrote about the band in several magazine issues . The group 's vocalist Joey Ramone related that " Lisa came down to see us , she was blown away by us . She said that we changed her life , She started writing about us in Rock Scene , and then Lenny Kaye would write about us and we started getting more press like The Village Voice . Word was getting out , and people starting coming down . " Convinced that the band needed a recording contract , Robinson contacted Danny Fields , former manager of the Stooges , and argued that he needed to manage the band . Fields agreed because the band " had everything [he] ever liked , " and became the manager in November 1975 .

On September 19 , 1975 , the Ramones recorded a demo at 914 Sound Studios , which was produced by Marty Thau . Featuring the songs " Judy Is a Punk " and " I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend , " the band used the demo to showcase their style to prospective labels . Producer Craig Leon , who had seen the Ramones perform in the summer of 1975 , brought the demo to the attention of Sire Records ' president Seymour Stein . After being persuaded by Craig Leon and his ex @-@ wife Linda Stein , the Ramones auditioned at Sire and were offered a contract , although the label had

previously signed only European progressive rock bands . Drummer Tommy Ramone recalled : " Craig Leon is the one who got us signed , single handed . He brought down the vice president and all these people ? he 's the only hip one in the company . He risked his career to get us on the label . " The label offered to release " You 're Gonna Kill That Girl " as a single , but the band declined , insisting on recording an entire album . Sire accepted their request and agreed to release a studio album instead .

= = Recording and production = =

In January 1976 the band took a break from their live performances to prepare for recording at Plaza Sound studio . Sessions began in early February 1976 and were completed within a week for \$ 6 @, @ 400 ; the instruments took three days and the vocal parts were recorded in four days . In 2004 , Leon admitted that they recorded Ramones quickly due to budget restrictions , but also that it was all the time they needed .

The band applied microphone @-@ placement techniques similar to those which many orchestras used . The recording process was a deliberate exaggeration of the techniques used by the Beatles in the early 1960s , with a four @-@ track representation of the devices . The guitars can be heard separately on the stereo channels ? electric bass on the left channel , rhythm guitar on the right ? drums and vocals are mixed in the middle of the stereo mix . The mixing of the production also used more modern techniques such as overdubbing , a technique used by studios to add a supplementary recorded sound to material . The band also used a technique known as doubling , where the vocal line used is sung twice .

Recording for the album was expanded by Mickey Leigh (Joey 's brother) and Leon with percussion effects , which went unmentioned in the liner notes to the album 's release . Author Nicholas Rombes said that the production 's quality sounded like " the ultimate do @-@ it @-@ yourself , amateur , reckless ethic that is associated with punk , " but concluded that they approached the recording process with a " high degree of preparedness and professionalism . "

= = Photography and packaging = =

Initially , the Ramones wanted an album cover similar to Meet the Beatles ! (1964) , and subsequently had pictures taken in that style by Danny Fields but Sire was dissatisfied with the results . The art direction was by Toni Wadler and , according to cartoonist John Holmstrom , the " Meet The Beatles " cover idea came out " horribly . " Wadler later chose a photo by Roberta Bayley , a photographer for Punk magazine for the cover. The black and white photograph on the front of the album was originally in an issue of Punk .

The cover photo features (from left to right) Johnny , Tommy , Joey and Dee Dee Ramone , staring at the camera with blank faces . They are all wearing ripped / faded blue jeans and leather jackets , standing upright against the brick wall of a private community garden called Albert 's Garden , located in the Bowery neighborhood of New York City between Bowery Street and Second Street . The stance of the group members in the photograph would influence their future cover designs as well , with the majority of their succeeding albums using a picture of the band on the front cover . Music historian Legs McNeil states that " Tommy [is] standing on his tip @-@ toes and Joey [is] hunched over a bit . " The back cover art , which depicts a belt buckle with a bald eagle and the band 's logo , was designed by Arturo Vega . Liner notes on the back cover fail to acknowledge backing vocalists and additional instrument players . Leigh , who performed backing vocals on several tracks , asked guitarist Johnny why he was not mentioned on the record 's credits . Johnny replied : " We didn 't want people to get confused with who 's in the band or who 's not . It 's our first album , you know , and we didn 't want people to get confused . "

The artwork became one of the most imitated album covers in music . The image of a band in front of a brick wall dressed in ripped jeans and leather jackets was copied by Alvin and the Chipmunks in Chipmunk Punk . Ramones 's artwork was ranked number 58 on Rolling Stone 's 1991 list of 100 Greatest Album Covers .

= = Promotion = =

= = = Singles = = =

There were two singles released from the album : " Blitzkrieg Bop " and " I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend . " The first was released in February 1976 , originally as a 7 " split single with " Havana Affair " as its B @-@ side . The release , along with the Ramones 2001 Expanded Edition , featured " Blitzkrieg Bop " remixed as a single version , although it maintains a time of two minutes and twelve seconds . On January 6 , 2004 , Rhino Entertainment re @-@ released " Blitzkrieg Bop " as a CD single , using " Sheena Is a Punk Rocker " as its B @-@ side . " I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend " was released in February 1976 as a 7 " single . It included " California Sun " and " I Don 't Wanna Walk Around with You " as B @-@ sides . " I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend " was also released in the UK , giving the band a presence in the European marketplace . Even though the song saw some success in the UK and Europe , it failed to chart in the top 50 .

= = = Touring = = =

In 1974 the band played 30 performances , nearly all at the New York @-@ based club CBGB . All but one of the band 's 1975 gigs , were booked for New York City , with Waterbury , Connecticut as the exception . After the album 's recording , the Ramones headlined for very few shows , usually opening for an identified cover band which played Aerosmith and Boston . When they opened at Brockton , Massachusetts , the audience appeared extremely uninterested in the Ramones so Johnny swore off playing as an introduction for other bands . Following this , Fields booked several headlining shows around the Tri @-@ state area , and they began playing frequently at gigs like CBGB and Max 's Kansas City . After performing with Blondie in New Jersey , they continued their tour to Boston , Massachusetts for three shows .

" Traveling was difficult . Most of the time , it was just Danny Fields , me , and the members of the band . We 'd get two rooms in the hotel , three of us in each . They couldn 't afford any more help at that point , so the band had to pitch in unloading the equipment . I 'd play the drums during sound checks , while Tommy went out to the board and mixed the sound ? and instructed the soundman not to fuck with the settings . We would enlist aid of any fan willing to help us load out at the end of the night . "

At the time , Joey 's brother Leigh was road manager , stage manager , chauffeur , and head of security . Vega , who contributed to the album 's packaging , helped out with the road crew as much as possible . Tommy 's friend Monte Melnick occasionally helped with the audio output , but this was typically done by Leigh .

Following their debut album 's release , the band performed at over 60 concerts for its promotion . While most of the gigs were booked in North America , two dates ? July 4 and 5 ? were in London 's Roundhouse venue and Dingwalls , respectively . Linda Stein pushed to make these events happen , setting up the band performances in the UK during the United States Bicentennial . Fields relates : " On the two hundredth anniversary of our freedom , we were bringing Great Britain a gift that was forever going to disrupt their sensibilities . " The band sold out for their first London performance , with an audience of roughly 3 @,@ 000 . Leigh described the Dingwalls gig as very similar to performances at CBGB . Likewise , these venues would go on to be headlined by other punk bands like the Clash and Sex Pistols . The band performed over 100 concerts the following year .

= = Lyrics and compositions = =

The songs on Ramones addressed several lyrical themes including violence , male prostitution , drug use , and Nazism . While the moods displayed in the album were often dark , Johnny said that when writing the lyrics they were not " trying to be offensive . " Many songs from the album have

backing vocals from different guests . Leigh sang backing vocals on " Judy Is a Punk , " " I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend , " and in the bridge of " Blitzkrieg Bop . " Tommy sang backing vocals on " I Don't Wanna Walk Around With You , " " Judy Is a Punk , " and during the bridge of " Chainsaw . " The album 's engineer , Rob Freeman , sang backing vocals for the final refrain of " I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend . " The album 's length is 29 minutes and four seconds and it contains 14 tracks .

" Blitzkrieg Bop , " the album 's opening track , was written by Tommy , and originally named " Animal Hop . " Once Dee Dee reviewed the lyrics , the band changed the wording , the name , and partially the theme . According to Tommy , the song 's original concept was about " kids going to a show and having a good time , " but the theme became more Nazi @-@ related after its revise . The piece begins with an instrumental interval which lasts about 20 seconds . At the 20th second , the guitar and bass cease , marking Joey 's first line , " Hey ho , let 's go ! " The bass and guitar gradually rebuild and become " full ? force " once all the instruments play together in ensemble . The piece resolves by repeating what is played from 0 : 22 ? 0 : 33 . Stephen Thomas Erlewine from AllMusic described " Blitzkrieg Bop " as a " three @-@ chord assault . "

" Beat on the Brat " was said by Joey to have origins relating to the upper class of New York City . Dee Dee , however , explained that the song was about how Joey saw a mother " going after a kid with a bat in his [apartment building 's] lobby and wrote a song about it . " " Judy Is a Punk " ? written around the same time as " Beat on the Brat " ? was written by Joey after he walked by Thorny Croft , an apartment building " where all the kids in the neighborhood hung out on the rooftop and drank . " The song 's lyrics are fictional and refer to two juvenile offenders in Berlin and San Francisco and their possible deaths at the conclusion of the song . " Judy Is a Punk " is the original album 's shortest track at 1 : 39 .

" I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend , " the slowest song on the album , was solely written by Tommy , and pays homage to love songs by pop music acts of the 1960s . The song used a 12 @-@ string guitar , glockenspiel , and tubular bells in its composition , and was said by author Scott Schinder to be an " unexpected romantic streak . " The next song , " Chain Saw , " opens with the sound of a running circular saw and was influenced by the 1974 horror film The Texas Chain Saw Massacre . At nearly 180 beats per minute , " Chain Saw " had the fastest tempo among the album 's songs , and according to Rombes , is the most " home @-@ made " sounding .

" Now I Want to Sniff Some Glue " contains four lines of minimalist lyrics which depict youthful boredom and inhaling solvent vapors found in glue . On the question of the authenticity of the text , Dee Dee said in an interview : " I hope no one thinks we really sniff glue . I stopped when I was eight [years old] . " Dee Dee also explained that its concept came from adolescent trauma . After several songs by the Ramones whose titles began with " I Don 't Want to ... , " Tommy said that " Now I Want to Sniff Some Glue " is the first positive piece on the album . The song served as an inspiration for one of the first punk fanzines , Mark Perry 's Sniffin ' Glue . " I Don 't Wanna Go Down to the Basement " is also a minimalist piece , and was inspired by horror movies . The entire text is composed of three lines , and the composition was based on three major chords . With a playing time of 2 : 35 , it is the longest piece on the album .

" Loudmouth " has six major chords and is a harmonically complex composition . The song 's lyrics are ? depending on the reading and punctuation ? just a single row or four very brief lines . The next track , " Havana Affair , " has a lyrical concept incorporating the comic strip Spy vs. Spy by the Cuban @-@ born illustrator Antonio Prohias . At roughly 170 beats per minute , " Loudmouth " and " Havana Affair " proceed at about the same tempo . " Havana Affair " segues into " Listen to My Heart , " which is the first of many songs in the Ramones repertoire that voice an ironic and pessimistic perspective on a failing or already failed relationship .

Written solely by Dee Dee , the lyrics of " 53rd and 3rd " concern a male prostitute (" rent boy ") who is waiting at the corner of 53rd Street and Third Avenue in Midtown Manhattan . When the prostitute gets a customer , he kills the customer with a razor to prove he is not a homosexual . In interviews , Dee Dee described the piece as autobiographical . " The song speaks for itself , " Dee Dee commented in an interview . " Everything I write is autobiographical and written in a very real way , I can 't even write . " Johnny insisted that the song is about " Dee Dee turning tricks . " The half @-@ sung and half @-@ shouted bridge in " 53rd and 3rd " is performed by Dee Dee , whose

voice is described by author Cyrus Patell as what " breaks the deliberate aural monotony of the song and emphasizes the violence of the lyric . "

The album 's next track is a version of the Chris Montez song " Let 's Dance . " The song features Leon playing Radio City 's large Wurlitzer pipe organ . The 13th track on the record , " I Don 't Want to Walk Around with You , " consists of two lyric lines and three major chords . It is one of the group 's earliest compositions . It is the first song on their first demo tape , written at the beginning of 1974 . " I Don 't Wanna Walk Around with You " fades into the album 's final track , " Today Your Love , Tomorrow the World , " a song that refers to a Hitler Youth member . Seymour Stein complained about the song 's original lyrics ? " I 'm a Nazi , baby , I 'm a Nazi , yes I am . I 'm a Nazi Schatze , y 'know I fight for the Fatherland " ? insisting that the track was offensive . When Stein threatened to completely remove the track from the album the band put together alternate lyrics : " I 'm a shock trooper in a stupor , yes I am . I 'm a Nazi Schatze , y 'know I fight for the Fatherland . " Stein accepted the revision and it was published in the album .

= = Reception = =

Ramones was released on April 23 , 1976 by Sire Records and initially received mixed reviews . It was reviewed by few critics upon its release , and many of those writers leaned towards a neutral rating . Music critic Adam Brown explained that early reviews of the album are hard to come by , calling initial reactions " basically , nonexistent . " Despite some early critics giving it a somewhat negative reviews , Paul Nelson of Rolling Stone wrote in 1976 that the album was similar to early rock and roll , and was constructed using rhythm tracks of great intensity . Jeff Tamarkin of AllMusic said that the album ignited the punk rock era , writing : " rock 's mainstream didn 't know what hit it . " Critic Joe S. Harrington declared that the album was a huge landmark for music history , proclaiming that " [it] split the history of rock ' n ' roll in half . " Theunis Bates , a writer for Time magazine , summed the album up with : " Ramones stripped rock back to its basic elements ... lyrics are very simple , boiled @-@ down declarations of teen lust and need . " Bates also said that it " is the ultimate punk statement . " Charles M. Young of Rolling Stone regarded Ramones as " one of the funniest rock records ever made and , if punk continues to gain momentum , a historic turning point . " Critic Robert Christgau gave the album a positive review , specifically writing about the album 's themes and sound quality .

Later reviews of Ramones tended to praise the album 's influence on rock music . In 2001 , April Long of NME rewarded the album with a perfect score , remarking that the Ramones were " arguably the most influential band ever , " despite their lack of mainstream acceptance . Stephen Thomas Erlewine of AllMusic also deemed the album influential , saying " In comparison to some of the music the album inspired , The Ramones sounds a little tame ? it 's a little too clean , and compared to their insanely fast live albums , it even sounds a little slow . " The album 's sound was considered by Erlewine to be " all about speed , hooks , stupidity , and simplicity . "

Regardless of this critical acclaim , Ramones was not successful commercially . It only reached No. 111 on the US Billboard 200 , and sold 6 @, @ 000 units in its first year . Outside the US , the album peaked at No. 48 on the Swedish Sverigetopplistan chart .

The album was included in Spin magazine 's List of Top Ten College Cult Classics (1995) , where it was noted that " everything good that 's happened to music in the last fourteen years can be directly traced to the Ramones . " Also in 1995 , the Spin Alternative Record Guide named it the No. 1 alternative rock album . In 2001 , the magazine also included the album in its special issue 25 Years of Punk with a list of The 50 Most Essential Punk Records , where it resided at the top spot . That same year , it was named the fourth best punk album by Mojo , who called it the " coolest , dumbest , simplest , greatest rock 'n'roll record ever to be cut by four sweet , dysfunctional screw @-@ ups . "

The band was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame at the 2002 induction ceremony , with the website stating that their first album changed the rock genre from " bloated and narcissistic , " to " basic " rock and roll . In 2003 , Ramones was considered by Spin 's Chuck Klosterman , Greg Milner , and Alex Pappademas to be the sixth most influential album of all time . They noted that the

album " saved rock from itself and punk rock from art @-@ gallery pretension . " Q Magazine included the album in their " 100 Greatest Albums Ever " (2003) list , where it was listed at No. 74 . Ramones was included in Chris Smith 's 2009 book 101 Albums that Changed Popular Music , who said the album " opened a whole new world of garage rock for those fed up with the excesses of existing rock gods . " It was also included in the 2005 book 1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die . The album went gold in the US just after its 38th anniversary , certified by the RIAA on April 30 , 2014 .

In 2016 , Rhino Records announced the July 29 release of a 40th @-@ anniversary deluxe edition comprising three CDs and one LP , including stereo and mono mixes of the original album ; single mixes , outtakes and demos ; and a live 1976 performance .

= = Legacy and influence = =

Ramones is considered to have established the musical genre of punk rock , as well as popularizing it years afterward . Rombes wrote that it offered " alienated future rock , " and that it " disconnected from tradition . " The album was the start of the Ramones ' influence on popular music , with examples being genres such as heavy metal , thrash metal , indie pop , grunge , post @-@ punk , and most notably , punk rock .

" When the [Ramones] hit the street in 1976 with their self @-@ titled first album , the rock scene in general had become somewhat bloated and narcissistic . The Ramones got back to basics : simple , speedy , stripped @-@ down rock and roll songs . Voice , guitar , bass , drums . No makeup , no egos , no light shows , no nonsense . And though the subject matter was sometimes dark , emanating from a sullen adolescent basement of the mind , the group also brought cartoonish fun and high @-@ energy excitement back to rock and roll . "

Despite the lack of popularity in its era , the importance of the album for the development of punk rock music was incredible , influencing many of the most well known names in punk rock , including the Sex Pistols , Buzzcocks , the Clash , Black Flag , Misfits , and Green Day . Billie Joe Armstrong , singer for Green Day , explained his reasoning for listening to the band : " they had songs that just stuck in your head , just like a hammer they banged right into your brain . " The album also had a great impact on the English punk scene as well , with the bassist for Generation X , Tony James , saying that the album caused English bands to change their style . " When their album came out , " commented James , " all the English groups tripled speed overnight . Two @-@ minute @-@ long songs , very fast . " In another interview , James stated that " Everybody went up three gears the day they got that first Ramones album . Punk rock ? that rama @-@ lama super fast stuff ? is totally down to the Ramones . Bands were just playing in an MC5 groove until then . " In 1999 , Classic Albums by Collins GEM recognized Ramones as the start of English punk rock and called it the fastest and hardest music that could possibly be concocted , stating : " The songs within were a short , sharp exercise in vicious speed @-@ thrash , driven by ferocious guitars and yet halting in an instant . It was the simple pop dream taken to its minimalist extreme . " In 2012 the album was preserved by the National Recording Registry , deeming it " culturally , historically , and aesthetically significant . "

= = Cover versions and tributes = =

Each song on Ramones has been covered by various bands . Sonic Youth covered " Beat on the Brat " on their 1987 EP Master = Dik , and , in 1991 , German punk band Die Toten Hosen played " Blitzkrieg Bop " on their cover album Learning English , Lesson One . A tribute album titled Gabba Gabba Hey : A Tribute to the Ramones was released on August 30 , 1991 . It contained the songs " Now I Wanna Sniff Some Glue , " " 53rd & 3rd , " " I Do not Wanna Go Down To The Basement , " " Loudmouth , " and " Beat on the Brat . " Screeching Weasel released Ramones (1992) , which consisted of the band performing the entire album track list . 1998 's Blitzkrieg Over You ! : A Tribute to the Ramones featured a cover " Judy Is a Punk " in German , and in 2000 , both " Blitzkrieg Bop " and " Beat on the Brat " appeared on Dee Dee Ramone 's solo release Greatest & Latest . The

compilation album Ramones Maniacs included Youth Gone Mad 's version of " Blitzkrieg Bop " (featuring a guest appearance by Dee Dee Ramone) and Yogurt 's rendition of " Beat on the Brat " . " Blitzkrieg Bop , " " Havana Affair , " " I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend , " and " Now I Wanna Sniff Some Glue " were all covered on The Song Ramones the Same . We 're a Happy Family : A Tribute to Ramones (2003) featured several of the album 's songs covered by bands like Red Hot Chili Peppers (" Havana Affair ") , Rob Zombie (" Blitzkrieg Bop ") , Metallica (" 53rd & 3rd ") , U2 (" Beat on the Brat ") , Pete Dinklage (" I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend ") , and John Frusciante (" Today Your Love , Tomorrow The World ") . In 2006 , " Blitzkrieg Bop " was reworked into a children 's song on the album Brats on the Beat : Ramones for Kids .

= = Track listing = =

2001 Expanded Edition CD

= = Personnel = =

Joey Ramone ? lead vocals

Johnny Ramone ? lead guitar

Dee Dee Ramone ? bass guitar , backing vocals , co @-@ lead vocals in " 53rd & 3rd "

Tommy Ramone ? drums , associate producer

Production

Craig Leon ? producer

Greg Calbi ? mastering

Roberta Bayley ? photography , cover photo

Don Hunerberg ? assistant engineer

Rob Freeman ? engineer

Arturo Vega ? photography , back cover

= = Charts = =

= = = Chart positions = = =

= = Certifications = =

= = Release history = =