"IT'S MORE THAN JUST A SOUND, IT'S A WHOLE WAY OF BEING - A PHILOSOPHY, AN ATTITUDE, AN IDENTITY"

FUEL AND FIRE

Loud, fast, and simple, punk rescued rock n'roll from suffocating on its own excesses, giving the genre a razor-blade edge it hadn't had since its earliest days.

The rebellious spirit and willingness to question traditional conventions—like the idea that you had to know how to play an instrument before you could start a band—would find their way into nearly every meaningful musical revolution that followed, from hip-hop to indie rock to techno. Music's only ever been just one facet of punk's identity, though; it's more than just a sound, it's a whole way of being—a philosophy, an attitude, an identity.

Developed in the mid-1970s in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia, punk began as what is now known as "proto-punk" music. Punk was rooted in, and continues to embrace, a DIY ethic; many bands self-produce recordings and distribute them through independent record labels, fanzines, and other informal channels. Punk music is typically characterized as short and fast-paced with hard-edged melodies and singing styles, stripped-down instrumentation, and often political lyrics.

A punk was misunderstood, an outsider. The term "punk rock" was coined by writers for Creem magazine in 1971, and became further popularized by the fanzine "Punk" which covered the CBGB scene in New York City as it exploded starting in 1974. By 1977, the influence of the music and subculture spread worldwide and took root as a second wave in a wide range of local scenes that rejected affiliation with the mainstream. In the early 1980s, faster and more aggressive sub-genres began to splinter off from punk.

Musicians identifying with or inspired by punk also pursued other musical directions, giving rise to new genres. **Today, punk is still going strong with energetic scenes all over the world.**

Circa 1975, Richard Hell was spotted in the East Village in ripped shirts held together by safety pins. Malcolm McLaren and designer Vivienne Westwood took that image back to London and stylized downtown punk artist squeeze into high fashion and pop culture. Westwood was inspired by the shock-value of punk and spawned a subculture that expressed youthful rebellion through distinctive styles of clothing and adornment, most notably through deliberately offensive T-shirts, leather jackets, and studded or spiked bands. In London, punk was about openly rebelling against a very entrenched class system. **The brighter, bolder, and more shocking the clothing, and the more of a disturbance it made, the better.**

Regional and philosophical differences quickly manifested from there. In New York, the punk scene was more of an artistic movement, and stuck with all-black everything. The sound and style came into focus through the Ramones, who created a uniform of shredded Levi's 505 jeans and black leather jackets. "They had no money," photographer Jonny Lens recalls. "The holes in Joey's knees were from wear and tear. They were not fashion. **It was shameful back then to run around with holes in your jeans, and the Ramones said f—k that, that's who we are!"**

At nearly the same time as it crossed the ocean to the UK, punk spread to L.A., where fans of the Ramones and Blondie adopted their distinctive looks to fit the city's unique identity. L.A.'s bands were diverse, from pop-friendly acts like the Go-Go's to the defiantly anti-commercial approach of the Germs, to bands like the legendary X who sat somewhere in between, but they were united by the bonds of their **tight-knit community.** "There were no paid stylists," Lens says. "We were stylists for each other. You could be an artist who expressed themselves visually from head to toe and also on stage. Or not—you could be a photographer or a graphic artist or a fan or whatever."

Before long, punk had turned, rapidly, into a caricature, and Sid Vicious's sad fate represents the pivot around how rapidly a

MORE THAN FASHION

more individualistic, idealistic subculture turned into hype. As the image replaced the invention, the ideas collapsed into imitation, as John Lydon laments often. A movement, he jibes, might look great, but it generates too many pedestrians.

Hardcore punk bands of the '80s and their fans preferred a simple, dressed-down style as opposed to the increasingly flamboyant dress of punk's first wave. Jewellery, spiky hair, and studded clothing were discouraged, as they could do serious damage to the wearer and others while moshing. Ian MacKaye, the frontman of Minor Threat and Fugazi, explained that hardcore was trying to move away from punk rock and what he called "a fashion thing." In his eyes, "We were really trying to differentiate between what people were calling punk rock, something [like] hardcore [scene] wanted to get away from." As a genre that claimed to be by and for working-class youth, hardcore punk rejected the theatrical punk outfits that developed in the late '70s.

There's no way the music could have existed without the look, and the coexistence of the two allowed punk's legacy to continue beyond its immediate context. The style and the music were both creative outlets, and taught youth that they could **live by independent political, creative, and aesthetic rules.**

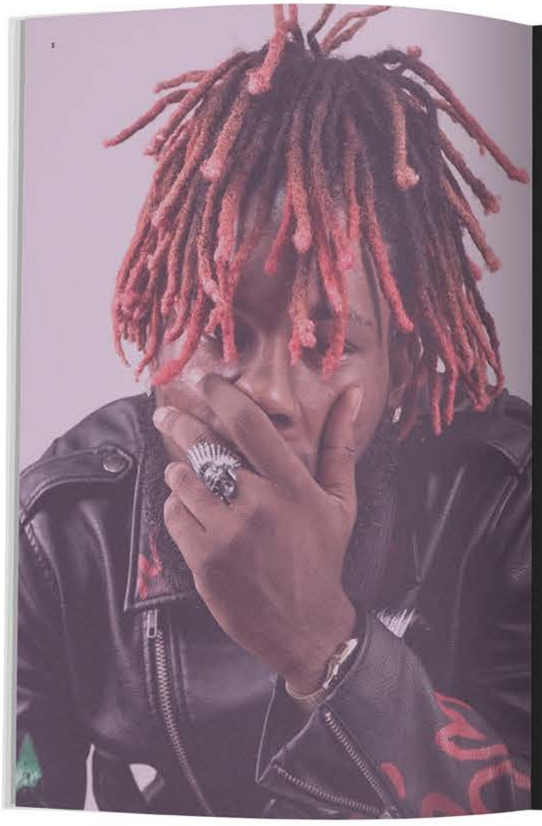
Punk style's most enduring legacy can't be boiled down to a particular item of clothing, or even the popularity of distressed jeans and dyed hair. It's more about the idea of being authentic, that if you do your own thing and dress your own way, you can make the world change around you.

LIP SERVICE

Everyone thought the Ramones only wore Chuck Taylors, but they actually preferred Keds.

Punks' preferred tartan plaid has always been Royal Stewart Tartan, the personal tartan of Queen Elizabeth II

Straight edge is a form of hardcore punk wherein its followers have made a commitment to abstain from using drugs, alcohol and tobacco products



"IF YOU DO YOUR OWN THING AND DRESS YOUR OWN WAY, YOU CAN MAKE THE WORLD CHANGE AROUND YOU"

STAYING POWER

Forty years after punk started, the music continues to reverberate, not only in the punk scenes that have popped up in cities and small towns around the world, but in the indie and alternative movements that punk inspired. Right now, there's a whole world of intense young DIY punk and hardcore bands, bands who tour the same basements and dive bars, who exist outside the economy and regular circuit of indie labels and festivals and bars.

Many of these bands are dominated by women, or people of color, or women of color. Plenty of these bands have webs of connections to one another, too. What makes punk special is not just the music or the words but the culture around it, it's also the do-it-yourself ethos paired with a push to create an alternative and independent space for creativity in spite of mainstream whims.

The network of friends that popped up in the 70s and 80s to provide a backbone of support to the burgeoning hardcore punk scene continues to thrive today as much as it did decades ago—promoters, promoters, zines, photographers, record labels and more doing it out of love to create a vibrant culture where artists can experiment, grow and thrive.