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Hi guys-

Here's the Public Enemy review. Believe the hype.  
Talk soon, love on ya, P

Public Enemy  
Gagarin Club, Athens  
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Brooke Shields and Sharon Stone are both very talented Hollywood actresses with very different screen personas. I remember watching Brooke in one of her early films, *Pretty Baby*. She played a 12-13 year old brothel-brat whose virginity was sold at auction to a snaky New Orleans businessman. When they jazzed her up with rouge, mascara and eye shadow, she was as toothsome a female as was ever witnessed on celluloid, and everyone from Mother Theresa to Larry Flynt would have loved the opportunity to crawl all over her. The red-hot, stripped-down, first-timer taboo forbiddenness of the maidenhead-taking event made her unbearably desirable to almost any viewer.

Sharon Stone, in *Basic Instinct*, played a mature, remarkably savvy west coast clubber/writer who could have easily started her erotic career working in the skin trade. She had the experience and know-how of a professional escort and the mind of a crime novel writer. This combination of skills is also a powder keg of sexual magnetism to the witnessing subject. Both Sharon and Brooke nailed down a particular fantasy for their audience. Public Enemy, from their early career to the present, has also changed in their stage and musical maturity, without losing a step of the excitement they generated as kids.

I saw Public Enemy in Washington, DC in 1990. At that time the group consisted of Flavor Flav and Chuck D on vocals. Their awe-inspiring DJ, Terminator X, provided all their musical background. It was as bare-boned and exciting a show as three young men could possibly generate. Their youth, anger, simultaneous wisdom and confusion, and sheer stage energy was staggering to witness. On Sunday night's show at the Gagarin club, the same energy I witnessed 18 years ago, if anything, had increased in its intensity. However, now they have wizened and crafted thier show to a consummate level of presentation.

Public Enemy now consists of Flavor Flav, Chuck D and DJ Lloyd as the creative nucleus of the group. However, now they have a full electric band as support. The combination of guitar, bass and drums coupled with the enormous talent of mega-groove creating DJ Lloyd unleashes a solid wall of funk/rap/throb to the attendees that virtually shakes one by the collar and rivets one's

temporal lobes into dance-mode without one being cognizant of the fact. The entire Gagarin club became, step-by-step, a mass of brainwave-connected, joyously undulating, Greek-people. The show began with a solo-set by DJ Lloyd. He is, undoubtedly, the Joe Satriani of hip-hop DJ culture. High speed blips, sputter and chatter spilled from his double-turntable console like electronic crickets trapped in a fibre-optic hurricane. His hands were a blur at the controls as he scratched and spun vinyl at unbelievable speeds with surgical skill and precision. It was the ideal way to welcome Flavor Flav to the stage for a one-off song before the entire band arrived on the hardboards.

Flavor Flav is the diminutive, comic anti-hero of the band. He plays his role against the physically imposing and more deliberately-mimed, Chuck D. The small singer introduced the song "Lose Control" which made its world premier this evening at the Gagarin club. With his herky-jerky movements, enormous clock-pendant hanging over his neck, and in-your-face smarmy presence he is the perfect foil. Chuck D may be the tall, muscular, imposing wordsmith with the complex mind of a King Lear, but Flavor is the court jester with equal, if not greater mind power and intuition.

Together they flash across the stage at breakneck speed, rapping in perfect sequence and never missing a beat of any presented song. They play-off each other's movements like NBA stars zipping down the court on a fastbreak, tossing their microphones like basketballs to each other. The choreography and timing of their movements is as complex and well-executed as the work of any professional dance group you can name. They are currently celebrating their 21<sup>st</sup> year as a collaborative musical duo and they still have the looks and enthusiasm of wild-eyed teenagers in their performance.

Their set included the entire track list of their 1987 debut CD *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*, plus many other of their chart singles throughout the years. And, like any really professional band, they know when to stop being pros and just party and have a ball with the audience. Flavor jumped into the crowd and went to the back bar to get a beer and flirt with the cute bar maid while Chuck made friends with the people in the first few rows. A conversation broke out between a local saxophonist in the balcony and the band. He was invited to play on stage and he squeezed out Coltrane-esque, squeaky, smart-guy, minor-key craziness to the delight of the stage band and audience. Undoubtedly, it was one of the best concerts at Gagarin club this year; bet the house on it.

There are few bands who can take their older material and still make it sound fresh, active and vibrant after years of performance. Steve Tyler of Aerosmith must have sung "Walk This Way" half a million times but manages to make it a sexy, wild ride every time. Ditto with Iggy Pop with "I Wanna be Your Dog." These guys are singing straight from their heart-of-hearts and it's the real thing, the genuine article, because they can't perform it any other way. It's the truth as they see it; perfect, diamond-crystal subjectivity, screamed into the void with vocal-chord popping enthusiasm. The same is true with Public Enemy. "Don't Believe the Hype" was as exciting, sensual and powerful as it was 20 years ago if not more so.

So, in the end, it would seem that Brooke Shields and Sharon Stone are two faces of the same coin: The titanic satisfaction of the de-flowering act and the mind-crystalizing fulfillment of experienced passion, together as one. The same is true with Public Enemy. Then and now, they were and are, the finest, most exciting and intelligent rap band on the planet. Who else even comes close?