

Sex Pistols/New York Dolls: Retro-rock Rave-up!

Kairaskakh Stadium, Neo Faliro

July 16, 2008

Perri Pagonis

[perripagonis@yahoo.com](mailto:perripagonis@yahoo.com)

The Sex Pistols and New York Dolls, arguably two of the rock genre's most influential and imitated bands, played their whiz-bang, brain-rattling show last night at Kairaskaikh stadium in Neo Faliro. Before I begin the show's critique, a spoonful of their pre-history must be presented to you, the reader.

The Sex Pistols had already sold-out their professional acumen and artistic credibility before they ever signed a record contract. They are the only band I can recall who told us, openly, that the group is nothing but a great cultural and economic swindol. They then proceeded to make records which were supposed to be quick, dirty and instantly disposable. However, amazingly, their songs have stood the creative and commercial test of time.

When their only LP, "Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols," was released in 1976, nobody was ready for it. It was the most snarly, massive, cocophonous tidal wave of rage, spit and guitar noise that anyone had ever heard before. Street kids everywhere ate it up like voracious insects eat cookies which have been dropped on the sidewalk. Every song became an anthem that reveled in its own anger, self-alienation and sense of societal dispossession.

The New York Dolls, by comparison, were glam proto-punks. They were far more interested in dionysian partying and hardcore jollies than anarchic smash-ups. Every rock critic on earth peed in ecstasy over their first two racous, driving albums, "New York Dolls" (1973) and "Too Much Too Soon," (1974). However, sales for both records were marginal and the band fell into the always scary category of *cult phenomenon*.

When the Dolls arrived on the stage last night there was no doubt that they are consummate professionals at their craft. Lead singer David Johanssen looks more like 1972 Mick Jagger than I'm capable of describing to you. His body is lithe and lean, hair simultaneously shaggy and punky, and his face, now, has the wise, tired look of an elder statesman who knows the game too well.

They played with cool fire and Oscar Wilde level wit while still being able to jump around like electrified rats for the crowd. Guitarist Syl Sylvain played sleaze-oid Chuck Berry burlesque guitar while new-guy guitarist Steve Conte rounded out the tunes with mid-range riffing and excellent slide fills.

They performed crowd favorites "Human Being," "Looking for a Kiss," "Personality Crisis," and "Jet Boy" with strutting kookiness and whiplash panache. New material "Dance like a Monkey," and "We're all in Love," were greeted with clean joy by the audience.

The Pistols were far more sedate and determined in their performance. Their stage movements ranged from blase to non-existent. However, their playing was tight, focused, on-the-beat, and in perfect alignment with itself. Singer John Lydon (aka Johnny Rotten) who never had great stage moves, scuttled around the hardboards like Quasi Moto with a damaged internal compass. His voice, however, is still as impudent, snotty-timbred and antagonistic to authority as ever. His trademark cocky and defiant demeanor is still active and going strong.

Their set included the punk classics, "Pretty Vacant," "No Feelings," "Liar," and "Holidays in the Sun." The crowd response to the pieces presented to them was wildy appreciative to say the least. Crowd-surfing and raised fist salutations to the band were par-for-the-course activities during their entire time on stage.

