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WHAT'S ON

Top 10 punk/new wave gigs at Eric's - as chosen by the man behind LIMF's Eric's to Evol concerts

Marc Jones, From Eric's To Evol music director, takes us through his top 10 gigs at the legendary venue, from The Clash to Adam and the Ants

By [Kirsty McHale](#) & [Marc Jones](#)
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Liverpool International Music Festival returns next weekend, and as well as a host of live music on the Sefton Park stages, the festival also brings with it a number of other celebrations and commissions.

Liverpool club promoter Marc Jones has curated **From Eric's To Evol**, which looks at 40 years of Liverpool's counter-culture and underground music scene, and includes a conversation panel, and two gigs next weekend at Arts Club and O2 Academy.

Here, Marc takes us through his top 10 gigs at Eric's and beyond...

1. The Clash, 5 May 1977

Liverpool's favourite punk band - no contest. This was unanimously voted the most important gig in Liverpool's punk and new wave history.

It has been picked out by people such as Bernie Connor and Dave Balfe (Teardrop Explodes & Food Records) as well as Julian Cope, Ian McCulloch and Pete Wylie who formed 'The Crucial Three' that night. Indeed, Pete Wylie recently stated: "That day everything changed... nothing in Liverpool was ever the same again."

The Clash were like gods in Liverpool, and not only did they have the songs, they looked fantastic and had the politics to back it up. Over the years the Clash played Eric's again, Mountford Hall, Royal Court and every scouser's second Welsh holiday home - Deeside Ice Rink!

2. Ramones and Talking Heads, 19 May 1977



The first Ramones album was probably the first proper punk record anybody ever bought in Liverpool, and they also created one of the era's defining looks with their NY street punk image - leather jackets, split jeans and white pumps, a look very much back in vogue in 2016!

Ramones played Blitzkrieg-fast two-minute songs. 1,2,3,4 was the intro to most songs and they could play 30 songs in an hour!

Supported by another US punk band, Talking Heads, two-band bills don't come any better than this... the Pinheads met the Psycho Killers! This gig was famously captured on

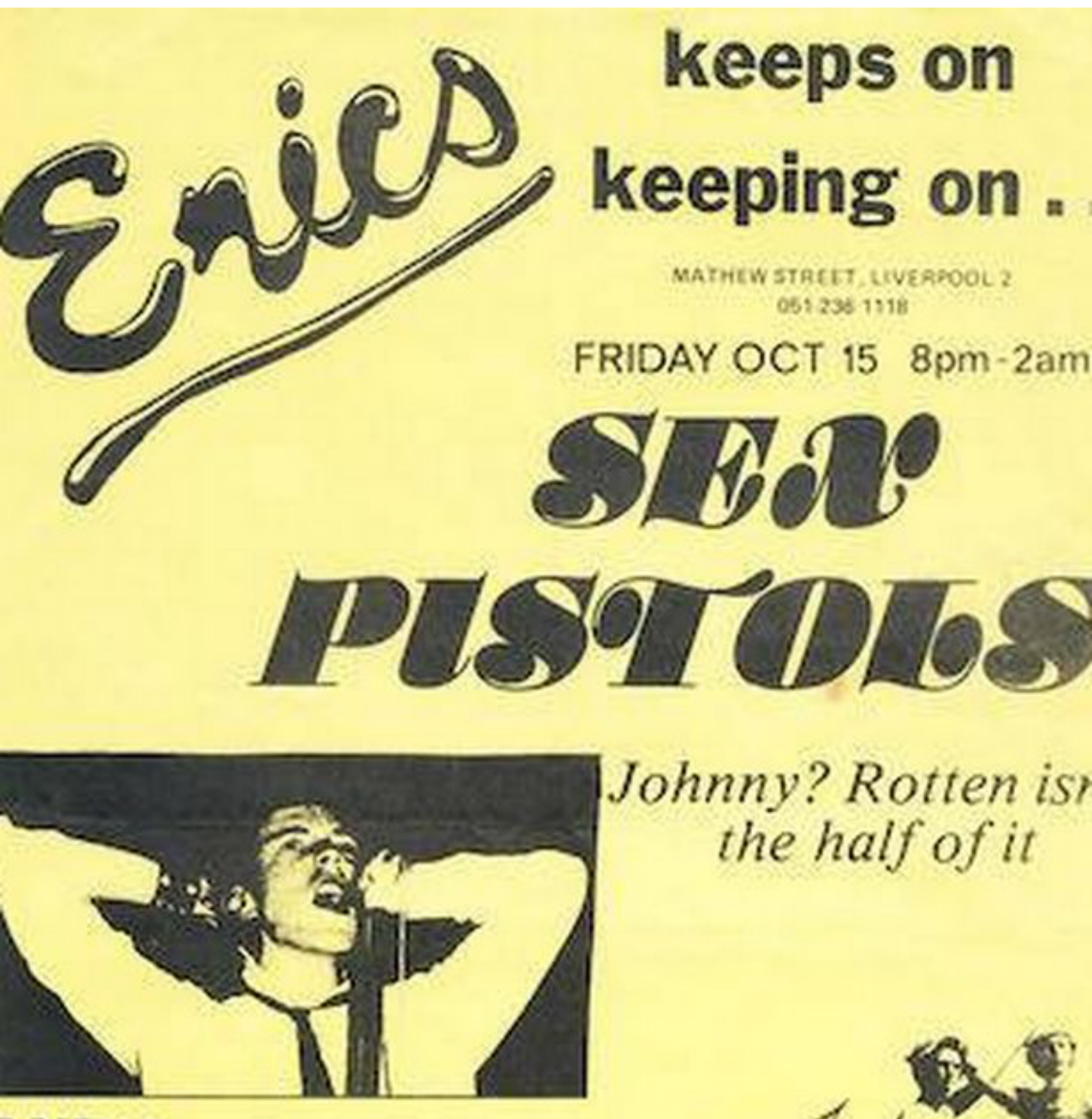
photograph by Ian Dickson.



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► Eric's club Liverpool – the golden years remembered in new book *Bombed Out!*

3. Sex Pistols, 15 October 1976





Eric's keeps on keeping on . . .

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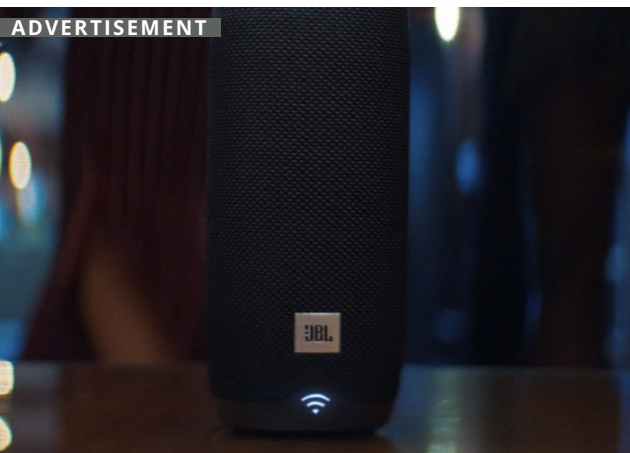
FRIDAY OCT 15 8pm - 2am

SEX PISTOLS

Johnny? Rotten is the half of it



This gig certainly didn't have the same impact as the Pistol's Free Trade Hall gigs in Manchester - in fact it almost went unnoticed as there were only about 50 people there (punk rock really didn't explode until around 1977).



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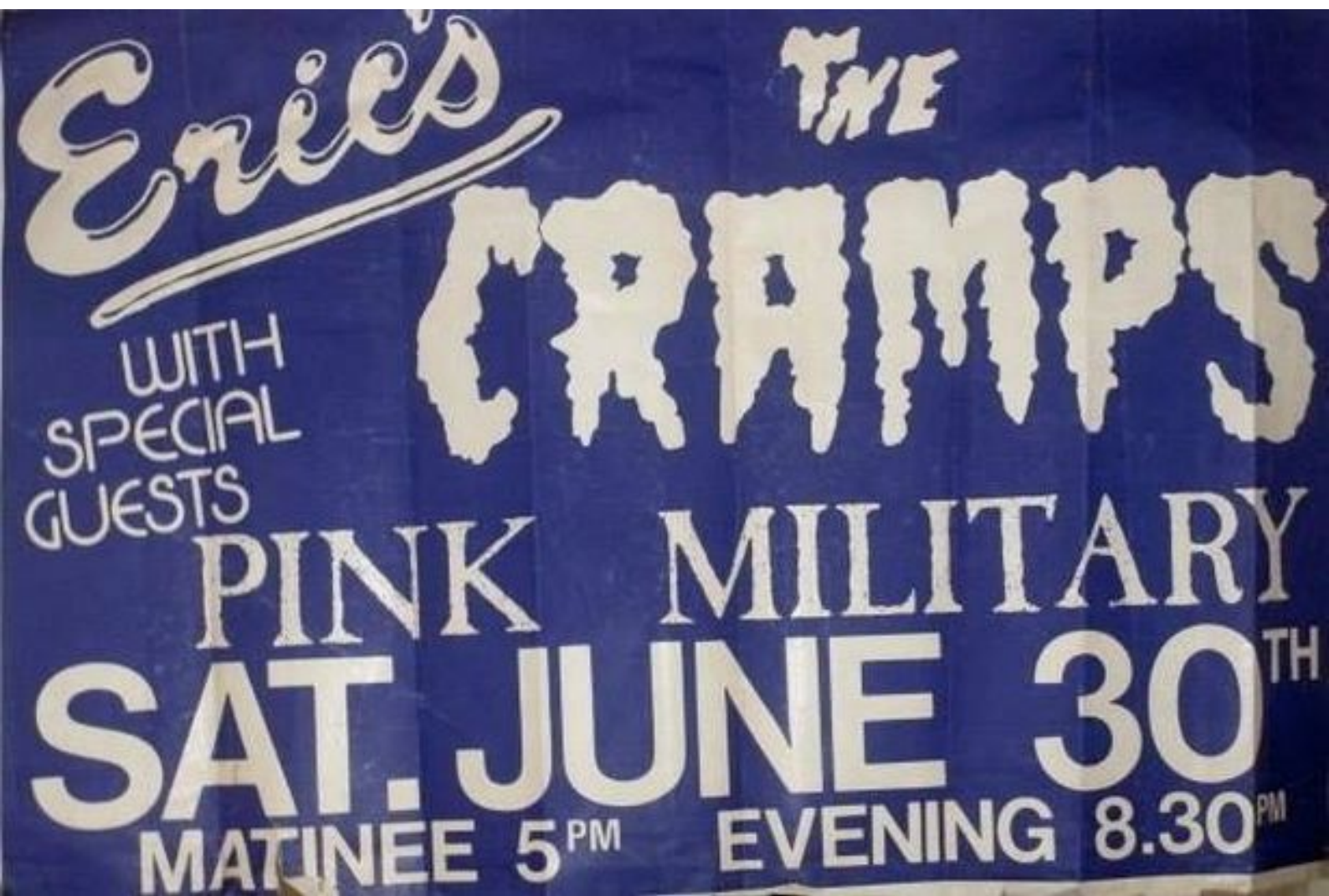
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Eric's had only just opened on 1 October, and among the first bands to play were the Runaways and the Stranglers. But on 15 October, the infamous Sex Pistols pogo'ed their way into town.

Roy White, who was in punk band Berlin and went onto to form White & Torch in the 80s, has amazing memories of the night. The gig was 50p or £1, but it wasn't very full - half the room were really cool kids and the other half were students (Roger Eagle and Ken Testi had offered cheap admission for students).

I always remember the anger, intimidation and energy of the band, and Johnny Rotten in particular. Jayne Casey, Holly Johnston, Paul Rutherford, Pete Burns and Lynne Burns were all in attendance that night.

4. The Cramps and Nightmares In Wax, 8 March 1980



Doreen Allen was the door girl at Eric's and worked in the club every day from the day it opened to the day it closed in March 1980. She later owned Planet X, the famous alternative and goth club, but she's famous for being very kind on the door at Eric's and letting many of Liverpool's fledgling pop stars in for free.

She picks out the B-52s at Eric's, but also The Cramps, who played there twice. So many people loved this band with their mutant punk rockabilly sound.

Firstly, they were supported by Pink Military with Jayne Casey, and Nightmares in Wax with Pete Burns (who went on to become Dead or Alive). Doreen picks out the second show as the most memorable as it was a week before the club was raided, and was one of the last shows ever before the club shut its doors forever.

5. Joy Division, 11 August 1979

BUZZCOCKS

WITH JOY DIVISION

TUES. 2nd OCTOBER

MOUNTFORD HALL

LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS UNION, BRANNEY HILL

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Nearly everybody told me I should definitely pick a Joy Division gig, but there's a lot of debate as to which was the most memorable.

The obvious choice is the gig at Mountford Hall with the Buzzcocks in October 1979, because it is the one most people went to. But for sheer brilliance, most people picked the last two gigs Joy Division played at Eric's in August of that year.

Because of Roger Eagle's Manchester connections, many Manchester bands headed down the M62 to Eric's almost weekly, and Joy Division were no exception. Pete Hook said recently: "We were just as much at home in Liverpool as we were in Manchester."

Unfortunately, Ian Curtis had a fit at the evening show, which meant he had to go off stage for a couple of numbers, but most people agree the matinée show was out of this world!

▶ Eric's, Dafna, Caz, Duncan... who are the people behind the names of Merseyside's pubs, bars and shops?

6. Iggy Pop, 21 April 1979

Iggy Pop was the godfather of punk. He had been in the seminal American proto punk band The Stooges and his solo stuff had been produced by his friend David Bowie.

Iggy Pop is one of the great punk front men of all time - he tore his clothes, cut himself by accident on stage but has a mesmerising stage presence, like some weird punk mannequin!

So he finally got to play Eric's on his 32nd Birthday in 1979, and that day he played two pulverising sets, one in the evening and a matinée where the audience spontaneously burst into 'Happy Birthday' which made him grin from cheek to cheek.

He shook Jayne Casey's hand and she has not washed it since.

Interestingly Iggy played the Royal Court on 7 July 1981, the night of the Toxteth Riots, and could only play eight songs. The gig was curtailed and Liverpool was up in flames. Dead Or Alive played the next night.

7. The Slits, 20 August 1977

So caught here between the Slits and X Ray Spex in 1979, but I've gone for the Slits because every time they played Eric's it was like a special punky reggae party.

One of the greatest things about punk was that it was the girls who found themselves in bands kicking against the macho posturing of aging rockers. For the first time women were empowered to get on stage - and sometimes kick the boys off them!

It was a sea of change and there were so many strong female characters who were truly great performers - Poly Styrene from X Ray Spex, Fay Fife from the Rezillos, Pauline Black from the Selecter, as well as Jayne Casey from Big In Japan and Pink Military. And of course, the all-girl band the Slits, who played Eric's on a number of occasions.

8. Dead Kennedys, 29 September 1980

The Kennedys played three Liverpool gigs between 1980 and 1982. They played Brady's (formerly Eric's) in 1980, the Royal Court in 1981 and Warehouse in 1982. We could have picked any of the three gigs because they were all incendiary.

Jello Biafra was an incredible front man with a very distinct vocal style. Highly politicised from the US, the Dead Kennedys were famous for songs like California Uber Alles and Holidays in Cambodia. They were a brilliant live band and one of best punk bands ever.

Special mention here to Fugazi (featuring Ian Mackaye) who were an equally important punk band from the States who played Planet X and the Bluecoat in the late 1980s.

9. Siouxsie and Banshees, Human League and Spizz Oil, 22 November 1978

LOADING

Siouxsie was another important figure in the Liverpool nascent punk scene, even though she was from London - she married Spitfire Boys / Big In Japan drummer Budgie who came from St. Helens.

One of the infamous Bromley Contingent, she appeared on that notorious episode of the Grundy show but played many fantastic shows in Liverpool, including one very famous

secret gig at Brady's under the pseudonym of Janet & the Icebergs.

Mountford Hall put on many brilliant gigs in this period including the Clash, Bauhaus, Magazine, Buzzcocks and many Liverpool bands who went onto be huge.



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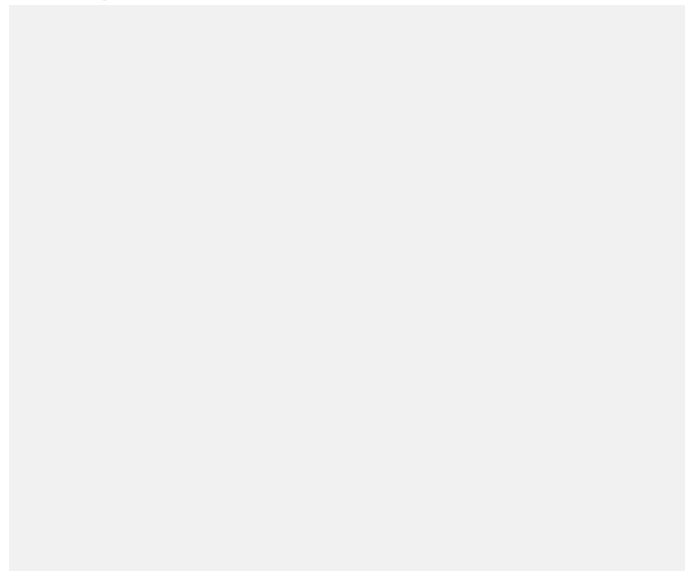
▶ David Bowie dead - Liverpool music community reacts to legend's death

10. Adam and the Ants, 9 November 1980

Before he was a dandy highwayman or Prince Charming, Adam and the Ants were a brutal, tribal and highly sexualised post punk band. Their gigs were dark, violent affairs - legendary Liverpool roadie Boxhead lost his two front teeth fighting at an Ants gig.

They played Eric's four times between 1977 and 1979, and all were magnificent in their intensity. However, the band split with one half going to form Bow Wow wow going while Adam Ant went onto pop stardom.

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I picked this gig because Adam and the Ants had just broken massively with Kings of The Wild Frontier and Ant Music. This gig was originally put into Brady's but the success of the band meant they had to do a matinée and evening show at the Royal Court.

It was an amazing gig with a real culture clash between the punks who had come to see their beloved Adam and the Ants, and the teenage girls screaming for the handsome guy with white tape across his nose and a hussars jacket.

You can buy tickets for the From Eric's to Evol events at the [LIMF website](#).

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