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That's me in the picture The Clash

**Martha Hayes** 

Fri 9 Dec 2016 16.00 GMT

'It was described as a riot': the Clash at the Rainbow, London, 1977



■ Eddie Duggan, left, at the Rainbow: 'The look on our faces hardly suggests that it was a riot.' Photograph: Chris Moorhouse/Getty Images

It was a few weeks after the Clash's debut album had been released. I was 17, and it was the biggest gig on the punk scene at the time.

Those were turbulent times, dominated by unemployment and discontent. A few months earlier, the Sex Pistols had been interviewed on TV by Bill Grundy and caused outrage. As a result, many of the dates on their Anarchy In The UK tour - on which they were joined by the Clash, among others - had been cancelled.

Violence would often erupt at gigs, and there was rivalry between youth factions: punks, teddy boys and skinheads. London could be a dangerous place for a young punk like me. I had left school and was doing various office, warehouse and factory jobs. But as a dedicated scenester, I was going to loads of gigs, hanging out with bands, having a crazy time. This gig was described in the press afterwards as a riot, but the look on our

faces hardly suggests that. The Rainbow operated as a seated venue, and

really the seats should have been taken out for this. Hundreds of teenagers stood up to see the band and to dance, and the chairs collapsed under the weight. Far from rioting, we were simply passing the broken seats forward to the stage. The girl next to me is my friend Selena. I love the way she's putting her hand up to protect her hair. I had started taking pictures at gigs. Behind me in the photograph is my

schoolfriend Mick - I would borrow his mac to smuggle my camera in. I'd wear it around my waist on a strap, keep a lens in my pocket and some spare film down my sock. At first it was just as a personal document, but then I started developing prints and taking them to the music press - in those days, you could just walk into their offices. If they used any of my photographs, a cheque would arrive in the post a few weeks later.



Wight festival, 1969



This picture brings home how much times have changed. If this gig had been in 2016, someone would have done a risk assessment and the seats would probably have been taken out. A lot of contemporary music seems to be safe and manufactured, marketed to teenagers through reality television or talent shows. I have 17-year-old twins, the youngest of five children, and while they do listen to some current stuff, mainly indie bands, they also listen to some of the music I was into at the same age. It's great, but also a bit strange: it's like the 17-year-old me listening to stuff from the 1930s and 40s.

There was a real DIY ethos to punk in the 1970s and, as a teenager, anything seemed possible - despite the recession, the growth of right-wing politics in the form of the National Front, and the high levels of unemployment. Let's hope the social and economic conditions facing today's teenagers (a divided country, a political swing to the right, inflation and joblessness) might also inspire them to create art that will be the subject of retrospectives in 40 years' time.

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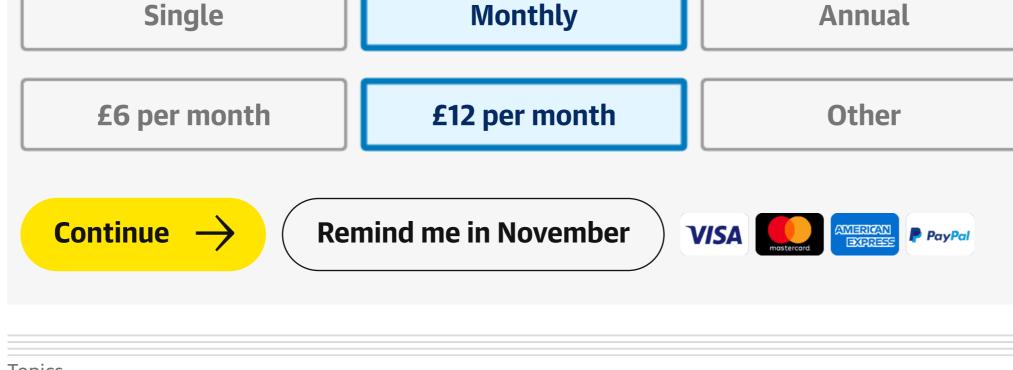
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