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Jazz Bilzen 1977



'Elvis has left the building' – on the morning of August 16, Presley is found on his bathroom floor in Graceland: the King is dead. But elsewhere people are shouting loudly: God Save the Queen. While disco reigns supreme in the clubs and The Bee Gees make a resounding comeback with the soundtrack of blockbuster 'Saturday Night Fever', The Sex Pistols throw out their 'Never mind the bollocks'. It's clear as day: Punk is here to stay!

Also in Bilzen, groups of punks with nails, chains, mohawks and safety pins make their appearance among the audience. With Theo Boelen as the new chairman, a breath of fresh air is blowing through the festival. There is hardly any jazz on the bill, but there is even more of punk, rock and pop.

On Thursday evening, three young British sensations get the party started. It is Elvis Costello who is the first to comment on the sharp fence in front of the stage that separates the front stage for press and guests from the audience. "Tear the fuckin' fence down!", he stirs the mood, causing some of the spectators to advance towards the stage. When a little later the singer of The Damned shouts, with a nod to the concentration camps: 'This is Bilzen, not Belsen-Belsen!', some hotheads start pulling down the barbed wire - until they are bleeding.

Joe Strummer of The Clash himself jumps off the stage to help pull out the concrete poles between which the fence is stretched. But he is promptly thrown back onto the stage by some security people. He suddenly runs into his own microphone stand and breaks his nose. He finishes the performance bleeding, but afterwards Strummer still has to be taken to hospital.

The floodgates will open on Friday night and will not close for the rest of the weekend. But that doesn't spoil the fun. Thousands of spectators will witness an excellent Graham Parker, the reunion of The Small Faces, the hard guitar work of Thin Lizzy and Uriah Heep and the Belgian debut of Aerosmith. The band arrives in Bilzen with three trucks full of material. When their roadies have unloaded just one, the stage is already completely full.

Three days of rain transform the Dell into one big mud puddle. Afterwards, military jeeps are needed to get the cars and equipment from the field and backstage.



On stage at the Dell on Thursday, August 11, 1977:

All Flemish Session with Johan Verminnen, Roland, Big Bill
Elvis Costello
The Damned
The Clash

On stage at the Dell on Friday, August 12, 1977:

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Ted Easton Jazz Band
Albion Dance Band
Ted Nugent
Graham Parker & The Rumor
Uriah Heep
Colosseum II

On stage at the Dell on Saturday, August 13, 1977:

Stella Marris and Tony Scott
Blue
Organ Contest with Lou Bennett, Mike Carr and Art Taylor
Stanley Clarke Band
Ian Gillan Band

Aerosmith
The Small Faces

On stage at the Dell on Sunday, August 14, 1977:

Yvan Guilini
Horslips
John Miles
Thin Lizzy
Crazy Cat
Sensational Alex Harvey Band

• Culture



Leisure center De Kimpel

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All opening hours

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