

Explain the Emergence of Punk in the 70's

Punk was a completely new musical genre that started in the early 70's and carried on through the most part of that decade. Punk was most popular and it was at its most 'hardcore' (as such) between 1975 and 1978. This totally new genre of music was completely the opposite of everything that had become normal in British music and fashion. Before punk came about all of the young people used to dress vary smartly and as can only be expected, there were a few young people who disregarded all 'dress codes' of the times and disliked all of the music. However, never before had Britain seen such an extreme refusal to be normal and like everyone else as the Punk rebellion. Also, before punk became so popular, the music was relatively mild and happy, and all melodic with good rhythm and harmony, and only the mildest of swear words were used in songs and only if it was *really* necessary.

Punk music had rhythm and melody, but it did not have harmony. This lack of basic melody meant that a lot of people disliked punk music, however it was also this lack of melody that attracted so many people to the music – because it was so different. Punk music was also extremely easy to play, so that anyone could play it and indeed they did. Hundreds of young people began to set up their own punk bands and play in their garages. All of the punk songs contained one or more swear words that appalled a lot of the nation – those who disliked punk. But the fact that bands were getting up on stage and swearing in front of the nation just made all of the punks love the music more – it was so exciting and never before had music like Punk been heard before. It was a type of music and style that meant that you could be free to do whatever you wished, without a good reason, all that the young people had to say was that they were a punk, and they had a perfectly good reason to act abnormally.

Punk concerts were just pure madness. The singers did whatever they felt like doing whilst on stage and the audience did whatever they liked too. The singers and instrumentalists spat and threw things into the audience and the audience spat back. People went to these kind of concerts for excitement and because they rebelled against whatever they could. And besides, they liked the music, and liked the clothes they wore and everyone there was wearing the same kind of clothes as them and also, I suppose because they wanted to meet other, new friends which were into all of the things that they were into. Punk concerts were yet another excuse to do whatever anyone felt like doing. People in the immense crowds could spit at each other and do equally as disgusting things without having to even say sorry to the people that they spat at. This kind of total freedom attracted so many youths to Punk.

Punks wore ripped trousers, ripped shirts and bondage pants. They also wore clashing patterns and colours. They wore safety pins practically anywhere they could pin them and their hairstyles were just about as different as they could be. Some had long, spiky multicoloured hair, and others were less bold, but all of the hairstyles found on punks were very unusual and strange much like the famous multicoloured Mohican. Punk was a very cheap fashion to follow as they did not buy expensive designer clothes, because they hated anyone to dictate what they were doing, so would not let fashion designers dictate what they were going to wear.

During the punk movement there was a huge economic crisis which meant that money was short and an awful lot of people were unemployed. This lack in money and jobs may well have been what drove people to such extremes during the punk era. From 1951 to 1977 the amount of serious criminal offences rose from 547 to 2463. This implies that the Punks were to blame as they were the people going to violent concerts and making the headlines everywhere for their extremely rude and dangerous attitudes. Punks really did believe that they could do whatever they wanted to do, whenever they wanted to do it. This

kind of ruthless, carefree attitude of the Punk's meant that the amount of crime rose because they really believed that no one could stop them doing exactly what they wanted to. This meant that in a lot of cases, punks robbed shops, and attacked defenceless people just because they wanted to and because they thought that no one would be able to stop them.

The Sex Pistols were the most famous and loved punk band of all time. They were constantly making headline news for their continuing fights and brawls with members of the public. One of their most famous moments was when on a popular live show called 'Today'. The host of the show – Bill Grundy was interviewing the band and one of the members purposefully said the f*** word. This was considered completely outrageous by all of the public and the Sex Pistols just seemed to be loving the extra publicity when the story made front covers of newspapers all over Britain. They didn't even seem to bat an eyelid when a couple of days later Bill Grundy – an extremely popular presenter, was fired because of what one of them had said on his show. Bill Grundy has never made another T.V. performance. This is just a small example of how oblivious to everyone else in the country who was turning up their noses in disgust at them the punks were. They lived for themselves and for having fun and they ruled their own lives, no one else did at all.

Punk did not take off in America for a lot of reasons. Firstly, there was no economic crisis in America so their unemployment rate was high and they had all of their usual wages, so morale in the USA must have been quite high during the punk era in Britain. Another reason that punk did not take off in America was because it did not have a Monarchy. The Monarchy in Britain was the main thing that the punks rebelled against. Lastly, most of the American citizens still liked all of the bands that had been around for a long time, like the Bay City Rollers etc. so they were still getting what they wanted from music, so why would they want to turn to new bands – they were happy with the bands that were around.