

# A Decade of Chaos: The Damned's Tumultuous Journey



## Smashing It Up: A Decade of Chaos with The Damned

by Kieron Tyler

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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The Damned, one of the most influential punk bands of all time, endured a tumultuous decade from 1976 to 1986, marked by lineup changes, addiction, and brushes with death. This article delves into the band's chaotic yet captivating history during this era.

### The Early Years (1976-1977)

The Damned formed in London in 1976, with a lineup consisting of Dave Vanian (vocals), Captain Sensible (guitar), Rat Scabies (drums), and Brian James (bass). The band quickly gained a reputation for their anarchic live shows and confrontational lyrics. Their debut album, *Damned Damned Damned*, released in 1977, was a critical and commercial success, establishing them as one of the leading lights of the first wave of punk rock.

However, the band's early years were also marred by internal strife. James left the band in 1977, to be replaced by Lemmy Kilmister, who would later go on to front Motörhead. Kilmister's tenure with The Damned was brief, and he was replaced by Paul Gray in 1978.

### **The Music for Pleasure Years (1978-1980)**

The Damned signed with Music for Pleasure in 1978, and released their second album, *Music for Pleasure*, in 1979. The album was a commercial disappointment, but it did contain some of the band's most enduring songs, such as "Love Song" and "Smash It Up."

During this period, The Damned began to experiment with different musical styles, incorporating elements of reggae, dub, and even disco into their sound. This experimentation alienated some of their fans, but it also helped to keep the band fresh and innovative.

### **The Stiff Records Years (1980-1982)**

The Damned signed with Stiff Records in 1980, and released their third album, *The Black Album*, in 1981. The album was a critical and commercial success, and it helped to establish The Damned as one of the most respected bands in the post-punk era.

However, the band's success was again overshadowed by internal strife. Sensible left the band in 1982, to be replaced by Roman Jugg. Jugg's tenure with The Damned was also brief, and he was replaced by Alan Lee in 1983.

### **The Chiswick Records Years (1983-1984)**

The Damned signed with Chiswick Records in 1983, and released their fourth album, *Strawberries*, in 1984. The album was a commercial failure, but it did contain some of the band's most experimental and innovative music to date.

During this period, The Damned began to explore darker and more introspective themes in their music. This was reflected in their 1985 album, *Liars A-Fair*, which was a critical and commercial success.

### **The A&M Records Years (1985-1986)**

The Damned signed with A&M Records in 1985, and released their sixth album, *The 13th Floor Elevators*, in 1986. The album was a commercial disappointment, and it marked the end of The Damned's decade of chaos.

In 1986, The Damned disbanded, with Vanian and Scabies forming a new band called The 13th Floor Elevators. The band reunited in 1989, and have continued to release albums and tour ever since.

The Damned's decade of chaos was a tumultuous but ultimately rewarding period in the band's history. The band endured lineup changes, addiction, and brushes with death, but they emerged from the experience stronger than ever. Their music from this era is some of the most innovative and influential in the history of punk rock,



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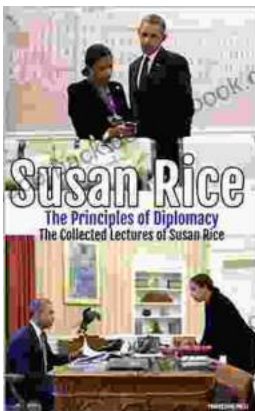
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