



## GELDOF INTERVIEW

Bob Geldof could easily have become the victim of his own image, were he not so clued up and self-assured. Being so garrulous and full of confidence has made him a target for the cynical British music press, which has tried to paint him as a self-opinionated bighead. If that worries him, it doesn't show. He's always been accessible to the media, being aware of their power, but he doesn't care to be mates with them.

"Don't take them seriously for a split second," he says, "or you're doomed. I'm very intransigent in my ideas. I see things in black and white, and the worst thing possible is for two dogmatic people to argue, because they just face off and scream vitriol at each other. That's basically the situation between the Rats and the Press.

"They'll do anything to become media stars, and usually the easiest way is by being bitchy."

### A Modest Man

Geldof may well have earned his "Modest" title, if it's come through being conscious of his and the Rats' achievements, and talking about them honestly. But beneath that is a very thoughtful man, and a very sensitive one, who has his eyes wide open and his finger on the pulse of what is happening today. He certainly harbours no illusions about the punk revolution, which the Boomtown Rats emerged right in the middle of.

"The punk attitudes in '76, I found nauseating, bilious and wrong. I thought they were lying through their teeth. I thought the people in the bands were lying, that they weren't being honest about their motivations. I didn't see anything particularly marvellous about it.

"It's happened time and time before, that there's been a New Wave, dare we say it. Reassessment of music is happening all the time. I was never pooh-poohing it, I was openly scornful of all the posturing. I thought the whole point was *not* having to posture, and not having to lie any more and being ruthlessly honest. I certainly haven't changed, but times have changed and I think I've been proven right. I think the attitudes and the politics have been shown in the period of two to three years as being ludicrous, as being a fashion, which I was claiming it was anyway.

"It's past, but there are still some great punk bands who still survive, and now you have several sub-groupings, like the ska thing.

"All the good bands will come from England, and I'm not English, so I'm not being chauvinistic. They always will, because of the ever-changing social milieu, and the fact that social change breeds tension, and rock n' roll is a musical tension, and so it's changing faster in Britain than anywhere else.

"There'll always be good bands and competition, which is good, because competition is always healthy, especially when you can eradicate it."

### Lydon Laughs

John Lydon/Rotten epitomised punk movement's negative attitude towards life in general. Geldof, who knows Lydon, believes that was an intentional sham on Lydon's part. Trouble was, not enough people saw the joke.

"The Pistols were really necessary, in their stunning rejection of everything. Like the best shooting stars, they died very young, but they had to. They were sacrificial lambs. We couldn't have been the Sex Pistols, we were too middle class.

"Lydon is still being negative about everything, but I think that's a bit of a sham, if you know him. Like he says, it depends from one day to the next what lie he's going to tell. But I think the guy's got an incredible personality, and I'd sooner encourage an individual personality than have some moron who can't inspire anything, let alone anger or whatever.

"He's like a spoilt child, you can always see him mentally stamping his foot. The one thing about Johnny Rotten that I admire is that he's honest. The point about the Pistols is that they could have been the next Rolling Stones, that's the ludicrous joke. I don't think I'd have had the courage to reject that and he did, he just rejected it out of hand. He was very aware of what was happening to him, he was aware that the Sex Pistols were a latter-day Bay City Rollers. That's what they were. An anarchic Bay City Rollers.

"I don't say he's the world's greatest hero, I mean, I can't stand being with him for much length of time because he behaves like a spoilt brat. But sooner him than some other clot."

Lydon's attitudes seem to come through strongly in Public Image Ltd, who seem to go out of their way to antagonise people.

"That's because they can't play. They're hopeless. It's the universal joke, still being ap-

plied by JR. People are wanking over it and he's breaking himself laughing."

### Non-Serious

So much for the Face of the Decade. Geldof seems to find it easy to reconcile a non-serious outlook with striving for perfection in what the Boomtown Rats do.

I take what we do seriously, I mean I don't go out of my way to write a crap song, or to make a terrible LP or to put on the worst show possible. Everything we do, we try to do our best at that particular time, no matter what it is.

"So what we do, we take ourselves seriously, but we laugh at ourselves, because in the end it isn't that important in the entire scheme of things. There's this sense of irony, and if



people are not prepared to laugh at themselves, then I'll do it for them."

### On Stage

Geldof would have done well to remember his own words when the Boomtown Rats came on stage at the Auckland Town Hall. Every concert has its share of idiots who make trouble, and while Geldof's concern for those who were being hassled was commendable, the show suffered for it. He held up proceedings to harangue the troublemakers, even to the stage of stopping "Rat Trap" while he gave people a piece of his mind. This was negative com-

munication, and not really necessary.

Presentation-wise, The Boomtown Rats are dazzling. The light show is original and clever, and Geldof is a master showman. Musically, more care and attention is needed. Johnny Fingers gave the best account of himself, when he could be heard. Everyone else was buried in a wall of noise, which certainly got the crowd moving, but was hardly satisfying aesthetically.

Still, few people could pull members of the audience on-stage to dance, and avoid chaos. Let's hope Bob Geldof was able to laugh it all off in the end.

Duncan Campbell



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