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Punk History 'Lipstick Traces' Hits the Stage

by Eric Schumacher-Rasmussen

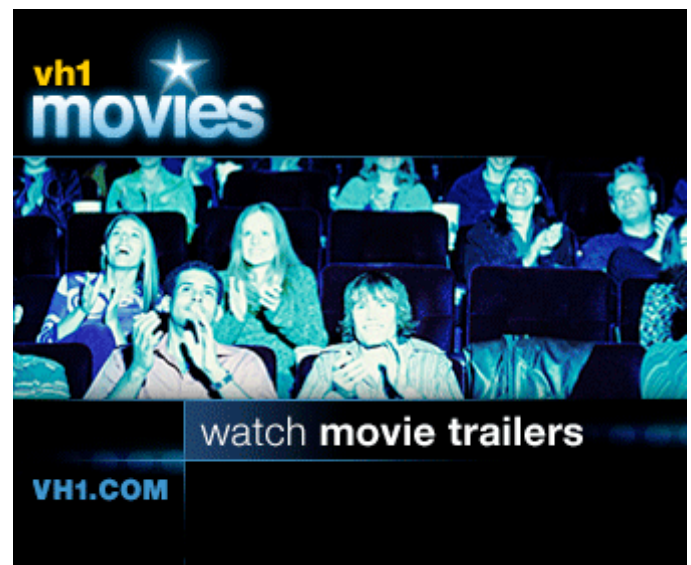
A New York theater troupe will try to capture the revolutionary spirit of the Sex Pistols in an off-Broadway production of *Lipstick Traces*, which opens on May 2.

The comedy is based on rock critic Greil Marcus' 1989 book of the same name, a sprawling look at punk and other countercultural movements of the 20th century, including the Dadaist art and literature of late 1910s and the left-wing French Situationists of the 1960s.

You don't need to know the book or the history to understand the play, according to Marcus, who had nothing to do with the production other than attending its 1999 premiere in Austin. "The play offers a great deal of explanation, without ever lecturing," he said. "It helped me understand things about the book that I didn't understand before."

One of the play's more exciting moments comes when the young John Lydon - soon to be Johnny Rotten - auditions for the Sex Pistols in front of their manager, Malcolm McLaren, miming shock-rocker Alice Cooper's 1971 hit "Eighteen."

"It's part lip-syncing, part screaming, and part vomiting," joked actor Jason Liebrecht, who prepared for his turn as Rotten by watching the 1980 Sex Pistols movie *The Great Rock 'n' Roll*



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Pistols movie *The Great Rock n' Roll Swindle*.

In addition to music from the Sex Pistols, Liebrecht said, the play includes other songs mentioned in Marcus' book, including doo-wop group the Orioles' 1948 song "It's Too Soon to Know" and the Buzzcocks' 1977 song "Boredom."

Lipstick Traces will run from May 2 to June 10 at the Ohio Theatre in SoHo. Tickets are available by calling 800-965-4827.

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