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The man who made Mont-de-Marsan the cradle of punk in France has died

Marc Zermati left his mark on the South-West with an improbable event, the Mont-de-Marsan punk festival in 1976 and 1977. Leading bands like The Damned, Maniacs, and The Clash passed through the Landes thanks to him. The man who brought punk to France died this Saturday at the age of 75.

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Don't bother looking! Marc Zermati is not really known to the general public. Even if you are told Skydog, it must not help you. However, this label that he founded in 1972 between Paris and Amsterdam revolutionized the history of French rock. A few years later, this native of Algiers injected a politically incorrect musical current into France, passing through Mont-de-Marsan, punk.



Marc Zermati (Wikipedia)

In the 1970s, the sound of the Sex Pistols and the Damned made Valéry Giscard D'Estaing's France grind its teeth to the point that the government in power banned the organization of festivals. Marc Zermati, a seller of imported garage rock and pub rock vinyls in a store in Les Halles de Paris, the Open Market, made it his mission to resist. His rear base would be in the Landes.

Why Mont-de-Marsan?

For two years, Mont-de-Marsan, the city of garbure and rugby, saw its Plumaçon arenas labeled No Future. The first punk festival in history was born with, in 1976, Dr Feelgood and The Damned, and in 1977, The Clash and Maniacs, to name but a few. The studded rendezvous fell through for the simple reason that "some guys took off with the car" would later admit the man who would rather call himself a "modernist".

Why Mont-de-Marsan? Because "we had a local relationship that could get us the arenas," Marc Zermati said in an interview with Vice in 2016 .

"I was very stressed by the problems caused by the ambient non-professionalism and at the same time I was extremely happy to have been able to create this festival with our team from London and Paris without forgetting the contribution of "duduche" [in reality Dudu, Editor's note], a local promoter."

"It wasn't very easy," he adds. But that was without counting on André-Marc Dubos, the famous "Dudu", organizer, in these same arenas, of a concert in 1973 by Nico, Warhol's favorite and icon of the Velvet Underground, who said to those around her all the good things she thought of the city.

"It's a city where nothing was happening," says André-Marc Dubos in a report on Arte. "It's a military city with paratroopers, an air base... in August, it's dead calm."

Marc Zermati died this Saturday at the age of 75. But punk is not dead.



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