

London WC2 Astoria

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A lengthy run of [B]Clash[/B] nuggets [B]'Safe European Home'[/B], [B]'Tommy Gun'[/B], [B]'London Calling'[/B], [B]'Bank Robber'[/B] sets the 40-year-old geezers pogoing as high as middle-yo

“I never came ‘ere to fuck around and I never fucking will!” he snarls, hauling himself out of the crowd after a mid-set altercation with a heckler. For two minutes, **Joe Clash-a-billy Strummer** is face-to-face with a mosh enemy and only the security men stop it turning into a fight. Wa-hey, a ruck! Wa-hey, primitive rock’n’roll reality! And isn’t that Old Father Time in the corner with a safety-pinned beer belly?

For the most part, though, dignity is in the house tonight. Or at least in the foyer. **Strummer** looks plausible in his biker boots and all black, sings with undiminished Westway snooker-shark rasp, and some of the **Mescaleros** songs composed with current **Strummer** aid **Anthony Genn**, even hold their place. The sax'd-up dub skank of '**Tony Adams**' swaggers and smoulders like, well, **Big Audio Dynamite**. The electro-billy ballad '**Yalla Yalla**' hits the terrace-soul mark.

For those with longer memories, it's a moving cruise to a time when rock and its myths held a safer place in the culture. **Anita Pallenberg**'s in the house, so **Joe** says, and **Chrissie Hynde**, and there's **Jarvis** downstairs representing 'the youth'. And that's the odd, inescapable thing with the proud return of a still-potent **Joe Strummer**, that despite offering top value as a teary-eyed, three-chord, dreads'n'teds sedition masterclass, precious few kids have climbed over the generational wall to have a look.

A lengthy run of **Clash** nuggets – '**Safe European Home**', '**Tommy Gun**', '**London Calling**', '**Bank Robber**' – sets the 40-year-old geezers pogoing as high as middle-youth girth allows, and if you squint at **Joe**, it's just like the videos, and like Ibiza never happened.

Great, of course, but questionable. **Paul Simonon** and **Mick Jones** must be sitting at home right now, trying to work out how much glory is left over when you've subtracted that twinge of pathos.