

SATURDAY NIGHT. The Clash are playing. It's a regular gig. In the foreground, two young lovers fondle one another earlobes . . .

Pic: RED SAUNDERS



CANNIBALISM AT CLASH GIG

(But why didn't anybody eat MILES?)

The Clash

ICA

A row of parked Vivas, Consuls and Zephyrs indicated that the ICA had an audience a little different to the usual. It was "A Night Of Pure Energy" with Subway Sect, who were terrible, Snatch Sounds, who I missed, and The Clash.

The Clash were real good. I enjoyed them a lot more than the Patti Smith Band the night before. They were not poseurs. They are everything that *Sniffin' Glue* magazine promised they would be.

It was as if they had crystallized the dormant energy of all the hours of crushing boredom of being an unemployed school-leaver, living with your parents in a council flat, into a series of three minute staccato blasts delivered like a whiplash at the audience, who were galvanised into frenzied dancing.

The audience stood out the disco, but now they demonstrated the choreography of the *West Side Story* knife-fight, the sparring partner bop, the villain seducing the virgin dance, the horse-ride, a little basic pogo dancing and even some old fashioned high-steppin' truckin'. Patti Smith was there, of course, and felt removed to climb onstage to dance.

The Clash have the musical intensity of the Ramones — a concerted high energy delivery — and their lyrics are much better. You can't hear too well, but if you do catch them it's an extra bonus to what's going down:

*"In 1977, I hope I go to heaven
'Cos I been too long on the dole,
And I can't work at all.
Danger, stranger! You better paint your face,
No Elvis, Beatles or Rolling Stones,
In 1977!"* ("1977" by The Clash)

Lead singer-guitarist Joe Strummer was in the 101ers until they broke up. The other guys are Micky Jones on guitar, Paul Simonon on bass and Terry Chimes on drums.

The Clash weren't wearing pink plastic trousers,

though a couple of dozen of their fans were. The Punk Rock scene — or New Wave Rock as it is better known — has already developed its merchant class of magazine importers, purveyors of 'punk paraphernalia' and, of course, journalists. The newly emerging independent record labels are doing fine work, but I personally find it hard to imagine a viable musical or social revolution coming from a clothes boutique in the Kings Road, Chelsea.

Not that the clothes don't look good — many of the outfits were really neat and were certainly freaking the NW3 crowd who'd come to see one of the ICA's other shows that evening. There were imaginative combinations of tri-colour hair, fish-net stockings with plastic minis, the curious safety-pin fetish, the ubiquitous plastic trousers and, of course, a lot of Keith Richard look-alikes.

The Clash played some great numbers like "I'm So Bored With The USA" and "Career Opportunities", all of which had a vicious treble ring to them. Then Joe peered down at the audience in front of the stage and muttered "I don't believe what's happening down here at the front . . ."

A young couple, somewhat out of it, had been nibbling and fondling each other amid the broken glass when she suddenly lunged forward and *bit his ear lobe off*. As the blood spurted she reached out to paw it with a hand tastefully clad in a rubber glove, and after smashing a Guinness bottle on the front of the stage she was about to add to the gore by slashing her wrists when the security men finally reached her, pushing through the trance-like crowd who watched with cold, calculated hipitude.

Creepy, but not the much exaggerated violence that is rumoured to attend the new wave bands. I've seen rumbles at everything from Who concerts to pacifist folk singing sessions.

Meanwhile The Clash continued their 30 minute set, heads snapping forward like snakes on speed. They ended with their theme tune:

*"White Riot. I wanna riot.
White Riot, a riot of me own!"*

If anyone's got the energy for it, they have.

Miles



TEN SECONDS LATER. My God, they're eating each other. These people are cannibals! The young man howls with pain as his blood-spattered young lady is dragged away, all the while trying to slash her own wrists. But for the dudes in the audience it's just a regular Saturday gig. Maybe they eat earlobes themselves? Edgar Froese (left) wonders if they'll be turning out for T. Dream. "Can't these Englishers afford sausages?"

Pic: RED SAUNDERS