

# ON THE R

## The man who didn't fly

Loudon  
Vainwright III  
London

AIN'T QUITE put my finger on but somehow this wasn't quite special as the last couple of Vainwright concerts I saw. It wasn't the songs I know he did all my favourites (well, almost), some of which are 'Hotel Blues', 'Plane, Too', 'The Reddy Boys At The Y', 'The Man Who Couldn't Cry' and so on. He did quite a few that I don't care for on record — most notably 'Clockwork Chartreuse', yes, live they worked perfectly. Even a couple of familiar numbers — on about a paranoid, n'other called 'I The Blues' — were great. And yes, he was very funny, and did manage to get the vast audience (for one man and an acoustic guitar and piano to sustain) singing along on the 'Wine With Dinner' and ending from laughter to po-

posed seriousness at the twist of an inflection.

But, I dunno, I was disappointed somehow. Earlier this summer and at last year's major London date I came out feeling terrific, this time I felt kind of uneasy. Maybe it was because Loudon actually seemed (instead of pretending to be, which is one of his comic fortes) a little unsure of himself a couple of times.

But then this was probably due to jet lag or apprehension over the fact that a live album was being recorded — or a mixture of both. It's just that the timing seemed a little bit off somehow, somewhere and the result was just good, not great.

But so what, everybody got a right to an off night sometimes. It's just a drag when it happens on the one evening when you get to see someone you really dig. Catch him next time around all the same.

'Cause even on a bad night he's s-o-o much better than most. — GIOVANNI DADOMO.

## The Clash High Wycombe

THE CLASH gave the provincial nightmare of High Wycombe an electric shock it won't soon forget last Thursday night.

They stormed a half-full Nags Head with one of their hottest sets since Patti Smith was moved to invade the stage at the ICA last month. The Crowd responded by bringing them back for two encores.

The Clash are currently firing with more compressed energy than a flame-thrower at full blast. They play with almost frightening conviction, and intensity, each number a rapid-fire statement delivered like a knock-out blow.

Theirs is an energy born of determination to get their message over. The words are about politics, pure lust and what's going on, like the Notting Hill riots. It's set to a rampant rock 'n' roll base. The Clash are one of the only bands prepared to meet 1977 on its own terms. They seem forced to take a back seat on the new wave recording front while groups like the Damned, the Pistols and Vibrators shove singles out. Why is it that the hottest band this country has got hasn't yet had a chance to get themselves on vinyl? Dunno, but going on last Thursdays set it won't be long before some record company wakes up.

It's a shame more people didn't tear themselves away from *Miss World* to catch them. Joe Strummer's introduction to 'Career Opportunities', repeated for the second encore, was well-aimed. 'We should do this number 20 times . . . to get people away from their television sets'.

Strummer was magnificent, screaming his words and punching the silly low ceiling in front of the stage with rage. With his yellow hair he looks like a paint-spattered Greek God.

Beside him the guitarist Mick Jones thrashes and leaps with wired urgency, ripping out sharp solos over the surging heartbeat rumble of bassist Paul Simonon and drummer Terry Chimes.

The set gained momentum minute by minute, through 'London's Burning', 'Janie Jones' and '1977' which could become an anthem. By the time they careered for the second time into 'White Riot', their theme song, you could practically see the sparks flying. That number will probably stand as my favourite two minutes of 1976.

I firmly believe The Clash are the most important band to emerge in this country for years. They're certainly the most exciting. They may be bottom of the bill on the forthcoming Sex Pistols tour but make sure you get there really early — even if it means ducking out to wash your hair during the Damned.

Before The Clash the still-filling room was exposed to Reading's favourite sons Clayson and the Argonauts, who came on like a parody of the Bonzo Dog Band.

They certainly presented a diverse selection of styles, including war-time drama, other people's numbers like 'Arnold Layne' and 'You Really Got Me', the usual rock 'n' roll parodies and their own mismatched serious stuff.

They tried posing about in the dinner-jacket and bow-tie style Rag Week fancy dress. Ultimately they were only spasmodically good for a laugh. — KRISS NEEDS.

Pic by David Hill

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**Eric Faulkner!**  
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