

Singles

REVIEWED BY



CAROLINE COON

The Clash: there's a riot goin' on. . .

THE CLASH: "White Riot" (CBS). Joe Strummer, the ex-crud turned king, rules! He joined the Clash last summer intent on making break-neck music with raging, up-front guitar sounds which would frame his songs like the flaming wire hoops at some Demolition Derby. And he's succeeded.

For more than a year he'd dragged around the pub circuit with his previous band, building up a loyal following but playing mainly to the numb butts of beer mugs. Like many musicians of his generation he was screaming mad to get noticed and break through the creeping apathy he felt was afflicting rock 'n' roll. A chance meeting made this happen.

He was accosted on the street by Mick Jones (guitar) and Paul Simonon (bass) who were strolling down Ladbrooke Grove with ex-Sex Pistol Glen Matlock. They told him what a lousy band he played in. He agreed.

Then Mick and Paul complimented him on his voice. Joe, in turn, thought they looked great and, from then on, three like minds forged a relationship which over the last seven months has caused a quiet (in punk terms) sensation.

This is the band we hoped would be the musical salve to the Sex Pistols' more verbal exploits. The Clash believe their music should keep people in touch with life's iniquities and the lyrics

of their songs — like "Career Opportunities" and "Janie Jones" — are street poems sizzling with often humorous invective against those responsible for urban decay.

But, because their dedication to entertaining sound is as fierce as their commitment to being angry young men, the Clash have established a well-deserved reputation for credible musicianship.

"White Riot" (with the fine "1977" on the 'B' side) was written by Joe and Mick after first-hand experience of the Notting Hill Carnival riots last year. It is produced under the guidance of their live gig sound man, Micky Foote.

A police siren, stampeding

feet, broken glass and alarm bells sear across the mix. Joe's malevolent voice pierces through Mick's cauterizing guitar lines. Paul, playing bass with the sensuality of Family and the aggression of Pete Townsend, is the exact foil for drummer Terry Chimes' impressive stick work.

The overall sound is a little safe and the lyrics between verses are sadly unintelligible. Hopefully, recording this single has given the band the experience necessary to iron out these problems on the forthcoming album. As it is, this is a debut on vinyl almost as great as one of their best live performances. And it's catchy enough to



THE CLASH: police siren, stampeding feet, broken glass and cauterizing guitar lines/JOHN MARTYN: toying with life and death/KEN BOOTHE: one of his finest tracks

sing in the bath! A hit.

Graham Parker and the Rumour: "Hold Back The Night" (Vertigo). This EP glows on the turn-table like a day-glo pink plastic moon. Typically, of course, it reeks of style.

Not only does Graham Parker play lyrical, no-messin' rock which has glossier outfits beat out-right for musical expressiveness but, from the prison-blackness of his shades to the last smudge of print on his album covers, he has consistently presented himself with enough charisma

to turn the pages of Image magazine to dust.

He sings "Hold Back The Night," one of the band's most popular stage numbers, as if he's punching holes in corrugated iron. Behind him the band take it easy, creating a fluid interplay of tension and good fun which gives the Parker sound its loose but disciplined texture. A classic song interpreted with originality — it has to be a hit.

David Soul: "Going In With My Eyes Open (Private Stock). David sings so tentatively it sounds as if he's suspended in front of the

Hill" (Island). John trips lightly through a song about his favourite chemical sweeteners, with the careless abandon only those who are resigned to toying with life and death can achieve. He sounds happy but behind every smile there's a shadowy sigh.

It's a beautifully sensitive track from the album "So Far So Good," which harbours "May You Never" (covered so well recently by Linda Lewis), one of the greatest songs John has ever written. Rare quality. Unlikely hit.

Woody Woodmansey's U Boat: "Star Machine"

Muzak — leaves the good ship drifting aimlessly. Possible Top 30.

Boney M: "Sunny" (Atlantic). This is a disco feel you can graft successfully on to almost anything. It's light and airy but kicks from the knees down. The old favourite "Sunny" bears up fairly well. On the basis of "Daddy Cool," a probable hit.

Average White Band: "Goin' Home" (Atlantic). The unmistakable bop 'n' hiccup from A.W.B. which is no more nor less than what they've served up in the past, and will obviously continue to do so for another