

Punk will continue to rule—but what comes next?

THE WORLD OF POP FROM THE INSIDE BY
CHRIS SALEWICZ, THE MAN IN THE KNOW

Whilst holidaying in Jamaica and checking out the local reggae scene a couple of weeks back, Mick Jones and Joe Strummer of the **Clash** experienced a certain amount of hostility from the locals.

"Jamaica wasn't exactly sure how to react to punks," Jones told me in the band's dressing-room after their show at London's Rainbow Theatre.

SOJOURN

"So when we weren't listening to the local music—fantastic reggae for at least fifty per cent of every day—we just stayed in our rooms and wrote songs."

This Caribbean sojourn was, it appears then, highly profitable for the band now have virtually enough material for the new album they'll start recording after Christmas.

First, though, a new single, "**Clash** City Rockers"—already featured in the band's stage set—will be released at the end of January.

David Bowie on the uncommerciality of his "Low" and "Heroes"

albums: "What is commercial? I'm not sure if I know anymore what a commercial record is, or if one can really tell what will sell."

Rock music's favourite chameleon intends to begin a world tour in February.

"The band," he says, "will be much the same as on 'Heroes' and we are going to use the same set as on the 'Station' tour. The first time I have ever repeated a set."

However, the acting career that was launched on the cinema screens in his role in Nicholas Roeg's "Man Who Fell To Earth" has not been abandoned: "I'll be starting another film shortly about a subject I've been very influenced by—German Expressionist Art. I play a painter."

PREPARATION

"What I really want to do in films is direct, actually, and I think of the acting as my preparation for that."

"I almost hate to say it but I feel I have a lot to express and I like to express it in different

ways."

It would be fatuous to pretend that as far as rock music is concerned 1977 had been anything but The Year Of Punk.

Obviously it is not going to go away.

ALIENATION

In fact, it seems certain that right this very moment all over the country thousands of musicians, inspired by the greatest year for rock music in at least a decade are tucked away in garages and basements rehearsing the sets and stage acts that their group will spring upon us come the Spring.

That Pistols-style nihilism—alienation is only one facet of punk is becoming increasingly evident by the manner in which melody, hook-lines and major chords have over the past few months forcefully asserted their presence in the New Wave.

Whether one considers the Beatles-influenced Rich Kids, the Who-inspired Jam or the utterly electric Ramones—due to tour Britain shortly presumably to promote "Rocket To Rus-

sia," their new album—the truth is inescapable. By next summer the milkman's going to be waking you up as he does his rounds whistling songs by punk bands. By next Spring, also, this ruling triumvirate should have been boosted to a quartet if the reports of the stage act of Cheap Trick—due to tour in February or March—are accurate. Whatever, their second album, "In Colour," on CBS, is one of the genuine delightful finds of 1977.

STUNNING

Equally stunning is Talking Heads "77". This New York New Wave band operate once again within a combination of stark minimalism and romantic melodies. Indeed, the closest reference point is their cultural stablemates, Television, whose "Marquee Moon" at the beginning of 1977 was certainly one of the first signs that something was, indeed, going on.

Also from across the Atlantic, though now based full-time in London and working with Mick Ronson



Talking music are (left to right) Philip Rambow, Mick Jones and Mick Ronson.

as his band's guitarist, Philip Rambow looks set to fulfil his promise of being the seventies version of the great singer-songwriters like Neil Young and Joni Mitchell who came out of his native Canada.

Whatever happens to rock music in '78 though, may very well be obsolete in just a few years time.

ENDEAVOUR

At least two major recording companies are currently racing each other to the launching pad in an endeavour to be first off the ground with pre-recorded video cassette programmes. It is the imminent arrival of this entirely new concept in leisure entertainment that is no doubt behind the strong rumours that the price of home video machines is shortly to fall sharply.

After all, once they've managed to persuade us to get the things into our homes then they can happily get on with the real business of the entertainment world: Selling things.