

ON THE ROAD

Something better change

The Clash Rainbow

'IT STARTS with just a little glance now/Right away you're thinking 'bout romance now . . . keep in mind/Love is here/Today and it's gone. . . ' Opening a review of The Clash with a Beach Boys' song? Why not? Its nicely — ah, anachronistic, and anachronism is the title of this film.

Blame it on Cane, don't blame it on me, Mr. Rhodes. Everybody (all eight of 'em) said, "Same old Clash — nothing's changed". The flashy clothes: zips and drugs and playground rock'n'roll.

Back-drops? Who needs sodding wallpaper on stage? Not The Clash, they ain't interior decorators, now, are they? They're our war heroes. Still. . . I might as well save my disappointment and venom for another flame: I remember trying to have a 'constructive' argument about the banal release of a song all about one's latest catfight with the record company ('Remote Control') with Mick Jones and he said, "(grunt) I just do what I wanna do". There's no guiding these young things. . .

. . . And there's no holding me admitting I stumbled out of The Clash's last night at the Rainbow and went down the Roxy instead. When your old songs sound even older and your new songs don't even sound like anything (mostly due to Joe Strummer's current penchant for singing in a hideous stream of coughs). . . something better change. Look out, there's Wire and, gawd, art behind you busy stencilling '1978' in your backs, boys.

Doubtless this review will get me smashed to smithereens, but I've been beaten up twice this week already. Bruised but still whining (grin).

JANE SUCK

my jaded critical faculties in check. When are these rightly or wrongly elected demi-gods going to appear? Then suddenly, without warning, the house lights dim and there they are in all their iconic glory, riffing dementoids knocking out the opening chords to 'Caroline'. Reaction is immediate. Mass orgasm. Ecstasy. The moment (sic) we have all been waiting for.

Perhaps it's me but to be honest the brand of boogie Quo pedal comes over a little too flat. The playing is under par and the visuals far too mannered. Backs turned, shoulders hunched, suspended over broken guitar patterns providing dual unending runs, circling to and fro. Ear to ear bashing. Numbers come and numbers eventually go. A controlled mixture of the tried and trusted and the new and obvious. All around me people are going bananas. It strikes me as really weird that so many can get off so quickly on so little. You can't take it away from Status Quo though, they are a well oiled machine that can do no wrong as far as tonight's crowd are concerned.

Me? I'm baffled. What I was hoping for and half expected was a traditionally titanic entrance, gradual easing off towards the

middle of the set and then the big climax, a peaking of conglomerate effort and effect. But sadly that is not the case with Status Quo tonight.

Quo operate on just the one level. Knock 'em out from start to finish and to hell with loosening your grip in the sake of contrasting enterprise. All the hits and more. 'Roll Over Lay Down', 'Rocking All Over The World', 'Down Down', 'Rain.

I don't know what it is about them that makes them so appealing to their hordes of die-hard fans. After about the fourth number my mind went a-wandering, still that could turn out to be my problem. All I know is that I encountered a lot of après gig smiles and beaming faces making off into the cold night air.

They obviously saw something I missed.

MICK WALL

The Boys Doncaster

BIT OF a dismal evening. Having been threatened by some jerk of a punk-basher with tattooed forearms on my way to the venue I arrived to find that The Boys weren't much to my liking, a fairly average bunch of herd-followers, or 'clones' to use the technical term, in fact.

With the exception of Kid Reed, who projected a certain aura of urchin-like charisma, they were all nondescript, and to a man they weren't up to much when it came to posing. And that's not good. Just lately some groups seem touchy about being referred to as posers/poseurs, but surely that's always been part and parcel of being a rock personality? To make the necessary impact you have to be larger than life, and The Boys just weren't.

Musically things were a little better. Their songs were a cut above those of many of their contemporaries in execution,



THE CLASH: our war heroes

Pic by Gus Stewart

Never have so many got off so quickly on so little

Status Quo Hammersmith Odeon

'Quo-woh-oh-woh-oh, Quo-woh-oh-woh-oh.'

FOR A long time now the Status Quo syndrome (i.e. the people like us, so why not the critics?) has been harped on about. Dissected, analysed and sprawled across pages upon pages of rhetoric nightmare by many a perplexed scribe trying to come to terms with the phenomenon that is Status Quo. Possibly there is nothing I can add to what has already been stated, re-stated and over-stated hundreds of times before. So let me instead just attempt to present some of the facts.

The music of Status Quo is people's music of the first definition. Played to the people by the people, well almost. A more down-to-earth approach to writing and performing would be hard to imagine.

No tricks. No heavy political stance. No metaphysical pretensions. Just give 'em what they want to hear at regular intervals (an album a year, months on end spent touring, plus the occasional appearance on TOTP) and watch the cash register notch up healthy sales margins.

The crowd at the Odeon tonight all appear to be seasoned Quo fanatics. The football chanting continues non-stop for well nigh on three-quarters of an hour.

'Quo-woh-oh-woh-oh, Quo-woh-oh-woh-oh.'

Aaaarrgghhh! I'm going mad in the midst of the converted struggling to keep what's left of



STATUS QUO: a well oiled machine

Pic by Ross Halfin