

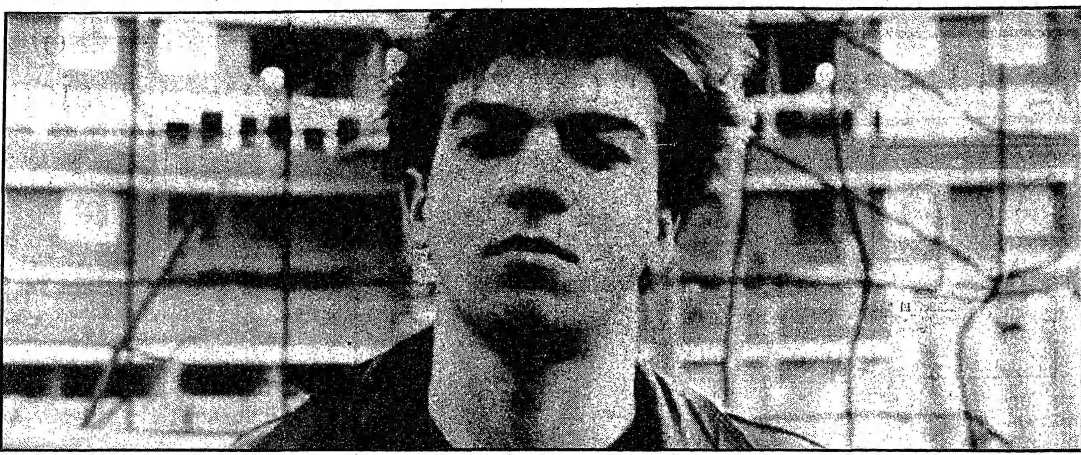
JACK HAZAN and David Mingay's *Rude Boy*, the British entrant in the Berlin Festival, opens at the Prince Charles next week. It has already caused a furore. The *Mail* has inveighed against it for half a page as an unworthy example of British film-making to be put before foreign festival audiences. The *Evening Standard* suggested that it was a startling event in the history of British film that those waiting in gleeful anticipation for the latest American success (Kramer v. Kramer) should sit up and take note of a home product for a change.

At Berlin, the jury gave it a special mention but the audience, which saw the Left of the political spectrum were split down the middle. It is very difficult to be told, in no uncertain terms, as this film does, that the left means the right to the post-punk generation of working-class youth. Or at least that is what the *Right*. If it is a film which seems to threaten bourgeois values, it is also, in a very awkwardly done so from a determinedly apolitical standpoint.

The stars of *Rude Boy* are undoubtedly *The Clash*, led by Joe Strummer, whose performances during an English tour form the kernel of the film. And it was *The Clash*, not the *Mail*, which first objected to it. There were rumours of legal action floating around the Festival. The Programme Director called Hazan and Mingay into conference to discuss the advisability of showing the film at all.

The *Clash*, who would probably not mind being called a punk group with a committed message against the exploitation of the disadvantaged young by a society which they claim, saw an early rough cut of *Rude Boy* and apparently decided that it portrayed most of their white kids as National Front supporters and the blacks as thugs.

But there was probably more to their initial objection than that. Since the *Clash* was put together, the film has changed management and softened the tone of its approach. Yet here they are on screen a year later in full anarchist fury, just



The film *Rude Boy* opens in London next week. DEREK MALCOLM reports on its chequered history.

# A vision of Britain seen from the gutter

when they are trying to win their appeal in America. The concert footage, all done with a single camera, could not be a better fit for their records. And Strummer himself comes over as a very considerable personality. I didn't much care for *The Clash* when I went in. I came out a firm supporter. Musically, at least, the film is extraordinary.

*Rude Boy*, the film's protagonist, is Ray Gange, a real-life mate of Joe Strummer, who plays a roadie on the tour — a young man without any of Strummer's political

convictions whose previous experience of any kind of job was in a sex shop. He loves the music but denies the sentiments. He also drinks, and is eventually slung out because of it.

All this takes place during an election campaign where we see Mrs Thatcher talking about law and order, a National Front speaker calling the blacks "scum" and police cordons trying to get between the racist and anti-racist marchers, a kind of documentary drama very much like Hazan and Mingay's *A Bigger Splash*, though if that dealt with David Hockney and the post-

sixties generation, this treats with *The Clash* and the late seventies punks.

Jack Hazan says that he first started shooting material for what he thought might be some kind of musical way back in 1977, at the time of the Jubilee. It was a pure fluke that next year they met Ray Gange and, through him, *The Clash*. Hazan and Mingay found the punk scene fascinating and *The Clash* music, which was attempting to politicise its audiences, extremely intelligent. They admit that they realised they were on to a good thing, but also on to something important.

"Actually *The Clash* were pretty hostile at first. Then they began to like us, especially when they understood that the film was trying to say what it's like to be a working-class kid in London, trying to gauge the possibilities of their lives and who are the victims."

"Even so, I was surprised at the initial objections. On the other hand, I expect people, particularly older people, to be bitterly disappointed by what the film now shows. It shows them a whole generation spitting on everything they clamoured and found of value. It shows them that we have failed. The punks' attitude is that we shouldn't complain about it. After all, we started a war, we built the tower blocks, etc."

"The film also shows that being black in a place like Brixton is a pretty desperate thing. It's not Harlem, but it's pretty near. It's guerrilla warfare — a lot of the crime is really political gesture. Their politics are of the street. Ray Gange understands that, even if he says so. His attitude is that, whatever happens from now on, it will just be a different set of bastards riding out in black limousines. And he

doesn't see why he shouldn't do the riding.

The section of the movie which deals with the blast is controversial, I know. But it is certainly based on the facts. Not many people know that during the Jubilee celebrations there was a massive overall police operation to keep them quiet. There were constant surveillance vans. There were a lot of bail refusals. To be black was to be arrested and to be arrested was to be in jail. Our role as film-makers was to make some sort of sense of it all. It was not on record for the first time in a feature film that could be popular.

"The film was mostly shot from the hip and shoulder, with the same stick-back observational technique I used in *A Bigger Splash*. I try not to be manipulative. I frame the picture in a certain way and let things happen within the frame. But you can do so much more like this now than you could five years ago — and you do better and more flexible camera work than you liked the concert footage, because I hate all that sixties stuff with four cameras poking around."

"Yes, I know it has been a long time since I made *A Bigger Splash*. But honestly, it's such a hassle making movies in this country, and you can get badly hurt just trying. I've done some foreign television and filmed friends in the meantime. But after making *Splash*, I felt like hell — even though it was made for only £18,000 and made a good profit. We got ripped off, but I'm not in love with the idea of making film for film's sake. Or if I was, it has been beaten out of me."

"I just hope that won't happen again. We were very lucky to find Michael White and John Goldstone to help us, we were very lucky that David and I, though we quarrelled, had a certain trust in each other. We know we are going to be criticised for it. But we think it's something quite valuable — at least we've scratched the surface of something no one else has made a feature film about. At any rate it is a real British film about British problems. And it's about us. That's something, isn't it?"

EDWARD GREENFIELD meets the conductor Riccardo Muti and learns all about dedication

## The death ray approach to an orchestra

IF YOU watch Riccardo Muti rehearsing the Philharmonia Orchestra — of which he has been principal conductor now for seven years of steady progress — you may at first wonder how the mixture of ever-fizzes. It is all quiet intense application, and the only moments of crisis come when suddenly Muti freezes in total silence, using his stare to glare on whatever or whoever has displeased him.

"We call it his 'death ray'," said one of the senior members of the orchestra. Muti fell about laughing when I reported the expression to him. No one till then had dared tell him about it, but rightly he took it as a compliment. He put on his Draconian smile and noted that it would sound marvelous translated into Italian.

To listen in closely to any series of rehearsals — as I have just done on the latest Philharmonia trip abroad for two concerts in Barcelona — and one point that emerges is that Muti subjects his players to a more rigorous regime than you are likely to find with other London orchestras and their regular conductors, even Solti and the LPO.

Barcelona — gaudy with flowered tiles — like a Sicilian cassata "in Muti's phrase" is not an easy place for any musician. By sheer determination and a great deal of money the Duxo, yogurt magnate, Don Luis Puñtella, has established the most spectacular in Spain, the orchestral season there as the most spectacular in Spain, the Philharmonia, which has been there many times, find the conditions taxing, one side unable to hear the other.

The acoustic was particularly hard on the first violins, and Muti was unrelenting. In a rehearsal for Brahms' Violin Concerto (the soloist Salvatore Accardo) Muti had them repeating one high phrase more times than one believed possible, and I wondered how the violins of the LSO for example would have taken such a basic lesson.

Yet Muti was right, and he made his demands with not the slightest hint of wanting to ease or pressure his some conductors seditiously can) but out of dedicated concern for results. If nowadays the Philharmonia strings regularly produce the richest and most resonant sounds, it is largely thanks

to Muti's vigilance and an ear which pounces on tiny points of intonation and worries over them till they are right.

In Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony just before the Sturm Muti complained that someone (again in the first violins) was playing a G flat too sharp, "mum" not sound like "F" sharp," he insisted. "Think very flat."

And when next time they did it right even by his standards, he nodded a knowing "there you are."

Misled perhaps by his unflagging energy and the authority of his training in Florence and Milan, I assumed in one of our conversations that he was a northern Italian. "You insult me," he said, amiably enough but with a clear hint that Southern Italians (he comes from Naples with paternal connections in Bari) are not pleased by such mistakes.

He has the pride of a southern Italian. Yet it never gets in the way of his sense of humour. He laughs a lot in company, yet for a conductor so sure of himself he shows remarkable modesty when faced with criticism. I asked him why he had taken such trouble to answer a col-

league of mine who had complained about the tempo of the Sanctus in Verdi's Requiem. It was only, he explained, because he respected the point and the man who made it.

His latest recording with the Philharmonia, due for release from HMV in April, again presents controversial points which he enjoys explaining. It is a set of the terrible twins, Cav and Pag, and flying in the face of long Italian practice he has insisted on purifying the text of I Pagliacci.

He found Leoncavallo's autograph in Washington, and on the authority of that has removed many traditional top notes, insisting at the end of the Prologue for example that the baritone's cry of "Incominciamo!" Ring up the curtain, should not involve a great flourishing top G but should follow a main line.

It may not quite be love natural and more expressive. In Florence where he conducts three opera productions a year he has already accustomed Italian audiences, at first scandalised later readily acquiescent, to hearing Bel-

lini and Verdi without unauthentic top notes.

Nowadays besides opera in Florence and the Philharmonia in London Muti has a third major commitment having now been appointed Eugene Ormandy's successor as music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra. There at least he has no problems about developing richness of string tone, and plainly he enjoys intensely working with players whose technical standards have the precision of a great machine.

He likes to boast that Italian orchestras have in the last few years achieved new standards of discipline. Others point out that it is partly because he himself has developed and can be more rigorous. But in between Italy and the United States, London where he still makes a high proportion of his records — is likely to find him for many years yet.

It may not quite be love affair between Muti and the Philharmonia, but everyone knows that death rays and all, he is the one who can most readily launch this orchestra into its finest flights.



Riccardo Muti— picture by Gerald Drucker

## A paper tiger

ANN LANDERS, a well-known American sob sister, revealed in her agony column the other day that she had received 15,000 letters on the promising way to hang lavatory paper.

"It gave me a marvellous insight," she said, "into what people care about."

Now in my haphazard wanderings around journalism I've tried to do a few things but I've never actually been a sob sister; it's not that I'd have had any objection to the job — just that it was generally felt that I didn't have the talent for it.

But in my occasional reading of agony columns it has never once occurred to me that what people care about — really and deeply care about — is the proper way to hang lavatory paper.

If pressed I would say that in my experience the typical writer to a sob sister is either an indignant 14-year-old whose mother, most unreasonably, won't let her sleep with her boyfriends — or some other woman who is struggling to get the golden rule of a night and wondering whether she's getting her share. But what people care about



BARRY NORMAN

much as men — is confusion, caused by rising quickly from the seat to get the paper, tripping over your own knickers and ramming the lavatory door with the top of your head.

If that happened you could lie there undiscovered for ages — or at least until you were an anguished wreck from without yelling: "How much longer are you going to lie in there, for pity's sake?"

But by and large if you follow the golden rule of the loo, on the wall and within reach — your troubles are pretty well over. You might give a little consolation to colour — does the pink loo better — or the lime-green tiles or does the pale blue give a more dramatic effect — but this is not vitally important because the average consumer of lavatory paper is doing an act of time contemplating its aesthetic qualities.

Either you hang the stuff with it loose end and the back or you hang it with the loose end at the front and there's very little more to be said. I suppose at a pinch you could hang it sideways but there doesn't seem a lot of point in that.

Mind you the question of where — rather than how — you hang it could require a little more thought but not along the lines of the one that you don't ideally want it in the dining-room, the hall or the garage. You can fairly swiftly to the conclusion that the best place for it is probably the lavatory.

With the options thus reduced to the only serious problem is whether you hang it on the wall or the ceiling. Generally speaking I would say the wall is preferable and I believe most people would agree with me. By this stage you're really getting someone where and if you've thought about it all by yourself you could now pause to reflect, with due modesty, that not even Ann Landers or Marjorie Proops or any of the other sisters could have done it.

But — and here I must offer a warning — beware of hanging the whole delicate enterprise in a moment of overconfidence and carelessness. For God's sake hang the stuff within the reach of a person of reasonable height. You may have the most reliable statistics before me but I'm prepared to bet that many a woman has been suffered by a fellow trying to grab a toilet roll hung six inches above his reach. It's another grave danger in such circumstances and women are probably exposed to it as


# Great Music by the Virtuosi of England.

Small prices by Classics for Pleasure. £1.99 per album.

Now you can acquire some outstanding interpretations of well-loved music by Bach, Handel, Mozart, Purcell and Vivaldi, at very low cost. Each work is performed by the renowned Virtuosi of England and is available on the Classics for Pleasure label, at the remarkably low price of £1.99 per album.

All six of Bach's Brandenburg Concertos are here, as well as his popular Violin Concertos. Plus all-time favourites like Handel's Water

Music, The Four Seasons by Vivaldi and Mozart's Horn Concertos. These Classics for Pleasure albums offer a marvellous opportunity to add some fine music to your collection. Why not listen to them soon?

**Classics for Pleasure**

Available at all good record stores. Most are on cassette at £2.25.

**GOTHIC CATHEDRAL TOUR**

Section: Travel (see third section: Cathedral Tour in France with...)

Gothenburg, Mont St. Michel, Accompanied...  
 Stained Glass, 4 Day Tour includes Dinner...  
 Phone: S. SEYMOUR TRAVEL, 10...  
 for details 01-947 8700.