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CLASH COMING

Joe Strummer — lead vocals & guitar — born in Ankara, went to boarding school and the Central School of Art. His first instrument was a ukulele, first gig was busking in the London subway, his first band was *The Voltures* who played R and B when it wasn't fashionable — first gig with *The Clash* was Sheffield, June 1976...

Mick Jones — lead guitar and vocals — born in Clapham, South London, went to school in Britain and collage in *Shepherds Bush*...

Paul Simonon (bass and vocals) — born in Brixton, South London, attended school in various areas, did his homework but didn't learn anything, taught Mick Jones to play guitar...

Nicky "Topper" Headon — (drums), born in Bromley, first played drums when he was thirteen, thrown out of school when he was 17 for smashing up a classroom, joined *The Clash* in April of 1977...

That's the line up of one of Britain's most outstanding punk bands *The Clash*. They'll be here January 31st (supported by *The Discharge*) at the *Commodore Ballroom*.

Since *The Clash* first started in 1976, they have been of paramount influence amongst the rising tide of bands in Britain and wherever punk rock communities surfaced.

They started out sounding much like the raw musical style of the New York band *The Ramones* but wrote angry lyrics that expressed the frustrations of Britain's youth in sharp contrast to the humorous nihilism of *The Ramones* lyrics.

Popular amongst very young working class youths in England, *The Clash* released their first album in 1977 — simply entitled *The Clash*. According to Nicky "Topper" Headon "the first album was written over a long period when the band was doing fuck all". It was a masterpiece of energy and gut feelings with songs like *White Riot* challenging the kids to take a stand:

All the power is in the hands
Of people rich enough to buy it
While we walk the streets
Too chicken to even try it
An' everybody's doin' just what they're told to

An' nobody wants to go to jail
Are you taking over or are you taking orders
Are you going backwards or are you going forward

White riot I wanna riot, white riot
A riot of my own...
In concert, *The Clash's* lyrics are almost unintelligible with Joe Strummer's roughhouse voice sllobbering on the words. It didn't seem

to matter much, the kids knew where he was coming from and they knew who his anger was directed at. Explaining that *The Clash* are no-one's political leader Mick Jones said "The Clash have been pigeon-holed everybody's political band on the scene... we are not *Top of the Political Taps*. We are not the new leaders everyone seems to be searching for".

Joe Strummer added "We just get tossed about like everybody else look — political power grows from the barrel of a gun — and I haven't got a gun."

The Clash in concert want to inspire people, Paul Simonon contends "... I want it to be like so great that when kids come to see us they really enjoy looking at the band all leaping about and all that and like musically really straight forward and simple, not psychedelic and indulgent. And that gives the kids the incentive..."

The Clash's new album "Give 'Em Enough Raps" was just released recently. It was a somewhat more subdued and refined product. Still it was filled with biting political comments on today's England.

Vancouver audiences have waited a long time for *The Clash* to come, but they're finally on the way.

By David Messer