

# ROADRUNNER

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# THE CLASH: Live in San Francisco

Pic: Pamela Barden

The Clash have always been called the British Political Punk Band, by the nature of their songs and the way they think. Look at the cover of their latest album — political, hey!

Formed in 1976, and now in possession of a CBS contract, they have recorded two albums and have been able to get world wide recognition, even though many new wave fans said they sold out to the large record company. In the U.K., they were banned a lot due to their violent nature towards...breaking beer bottles on stage. But because of their careful planning, The Clash have emerged as Britain's greatest current-day punk band.

The band have had one line up change, swapping drummers, and now consist of: Mick Jones (lead guitar/vocals), Joe Strummer (vocals/guitar) who formed the group; Paul Simonon (bass/vocals) and Topper Headon (drums).

Mick and Joe were in San Francisco recently putting the final touches to the new album — "Give Em Enough Rope", at a studio here in town. Now they were back with the rest of the band for a one-night show with Bo Diddley and Pearl Harbour and the Explosions, a local band. After being approached by New Youth Productions, the Clash agreed to do a benefit concert, the next night, proceeds going to the opening of a new punk venue in San Francisco.

So with a friend in one hand and three dollars in the other, I drove down and waited in a line that stretched a block and a half. The show was held in a large old church with balconies, stained glass windows and everything else you expect to find in a church. After waiting one and a half hours and jumping the queue a few times, we got in to see the first support band coming off. The Zeros, a local band, came on next; they played well. By the time they finished the place was packed, mainly with S.F. punks who were the first to know of the concert, even though it was hinted on the radio a few times.

As equipment was being moved on and off, the main part of the crowd packed closer to the stage with some already jumping in anticipation. The Clash came on and straight away jumped into "I Am So Bored With The U.S.A.". Every song they played



seemed to be a climax (they played quite a number of songs from their new album). These songs seemed to be slower than those from the first album ("The Clash"), but they were bursting with hooks and choruses that stuck in your mind. The lyrics were also very sharp, when you could hear them. The sound on the vocals, throughout the night, was not too good, with a continuous hum of feedback, but what else do you want for three dollars?

Breaking into songs like "White Riot" and "Police And Thieves", which by the way, is No. 27 on Top Forty charts in the

U.S., they really got the crowd moving. The songs that came over well were "Julie's In The Drug Squad" and "English Civil War" (rehash of "Johnny Comes Marching Home"), with an excellent guitar solo from Mick. Also "Stay Free", which is about old school mates and prison, "Complete Control" (self-explanatory) and "London's Burning", which tells of the boredom of city life. The energy they created the whole night was intense, with Mick firing out machine-gun solos from his guitar over Joe's raspy voice and Paul's threatening but simple bass lines. And not to forget the springy

solid brickwall beat from Topper, who I think is the vital part of the Clash's sound, and one of the best new wave drummers in the world.

They finished off with "1977" and left the stage with the crowd gasping for more. They returned for one encore and that was it. The Clash had left their mark, with the staccato attack of "Tommy Gun" as the finale.

It was an excellent show. If they ever come to Oz, go and see them — you will not be disappointed.

— STEWART MACCIOLLI