

# POP



by NOREEN TAYLOR

THE throne of rock stands empty. Sid Vicious is dead, the Stones are senior citizens and The Who are history.

New kings will be crowned in the eighties.

And in the wings wait four men. Joe Strummer, Mick Jones, Paul Simonon and Nicky Headon—The Clash.

On stage they are brutal and brilliant. Off stage they are the rebels who raise two fingers to everyone except their audience—the kids.

They believe they'll get away with it as well.

They formed in London in 1976 and now after their second album, "Give 'Em Enough Rope," the American and British critics are calling them the best new rock band in the world.

Despite these accolades, The Clash are going to make it hard for the kingmakers.

I talked to the two writers of the band, Jones and Strummer. No hotel suites or plush offices for Clash interviews. Instead a small, crowded sandwich bar.

## Game

They came in, draped in leather, ordered banana milk shakes and gave a run-down on how not to play the game game.

Strummer, the vocalist who acts and talks like a Cockney Bogart, said: "We won't do 'Top Of The Pops' or any other show on British television. They are all rubbish—old men's ideas of how pop shows should be run."

"It means not bending over backwards to please America like most British bands do when they get there. And it means not selling out, like everyone who's made it, by buying

# Clash, bang, wallop!

## How a brash new band is making waves

white Rolls-Royces and mansions."

The Clash take their firm line seriously. On their recent sell-out tour of the States they snubbed fifty record chiefs who had flown into Los Angeles to have their pictures taken with the band.

Mick Jones explained: "We felt we were being pushed around, so we told them to push off."

"If you don't do that you end up as part of

middle America playing business conventions.

"We're reacting against that world. The world that produces films like Sgt. Pepper and groups like The Bee Gees.

"They are the people who were making music so boring before bands like us came along and changed it."

## Power

"Pop shouldn't be safe and secure. Kids don't want that any more."

Like all good heroes, The Clash sell philosophy as well as records. The words of one of their songs say:

*Don't complain about your useless employment, Jack it in forever tonight,*

*Or shut your mouth and pretend to enjoy it Think of all the money you've got.*

Mick said: "If we've got power then we'd better be sure we're doing some good with it."

"If kids are unemployed, or if they're stuck in boring jobs with nowhere to go at night, then they should be asking questions and doing something to change things."



ON THE WAY UP: Joe Strummer.

"What we're saying is don't take all the s--- that's thrown at you."

"There's more to life," said Strummer, "than trying to get in the top ten. We want our songs to help people protest and rebel."

The Clash make their own protest by doing benefit concerts for Rock Against Racism, and other causes in which they believe.

Surprisingly for a rock band, that includes fighting sexism.

Mick said: "None of that sexy macho stuff for us. That's not our image. There are enough self-indulgent bores around doing that already."

As they stood to leave, I asked if they were really as hard as their image.

"Who me?" said Mick. "I give me gran chocolates on Mother's Day."

They reached the door and a young kid, who had been watching them intently from the corner of the cafe, darted to the table.

He lifted Strummer's milk-shake straw and placed it lovingly in his pocket.

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REBELS OF ROCK: Mick Jones and Paul Simonon.

## SINGLES

- ★ **BOYS KEEP SWINGING** (RCA): Experimental David Bowie number. Wild, interesting, but hardly commercial.
- ★ **WANTED** (GTO): Haunting, attractive song from The Dooleys. If their sound is a little different, it's because sisters Ann and Kathy take over the vocals.
- ★ **MINDLESS BOOGIE** (RAK): Hot Chocolate with a jungle flavour. Some powerful singing from Erol Brown, who wrote it.

## ALBUMS

- ★ **SKY** (Ariola): You've never heard anything like this before. A superb blend of rock and classical music from John Williams and such other great musicians as Herbie Flowers, Kevin Peek, Francis Monkman and Tristan Fry. They had a ball. So will you.
- ★ **THE BELLS** (Arista): Lou Reed, pioneer of punk rock, is an acquired taste. The LP contains some curious songs, and if you're into this kind of thing, I guess you'll buy it. But it isn't for me.

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