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# The death of a hippie's dream

## Tribal Stomp II Monterey

What if they threw a Woodstock and nobody came?

It was called "Tribal Stomp II" and it was held at the Monterey Fairgrounds, site of the legendary 1967 Monterey Pop Festival — the first major outdoor rock festival; the one that set the rock and roll world on its ear with performances by The Who, Jimi Hendrix, Otis Redding and Janis Joplin, projecting those artistes into the international spotlight.

The idea was to combine the best of Woodstock, the Monterey Pop Festival and the free "tribal stomps" which were held in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco in the mid '60s.

Of course, "Tribal Stomp II" wasn't free. But The Clash, Robert Fripp, The Mighty Diamonds and Joe Ely, as well as Maria Muldaur, The Persuasions, Big Mama Thornton, The Chambers Brothers and reformed versions of Country Joe and the Fish and The Blues Project with Al Kooper were booked. Films, seminars, a batch of lesser known bands

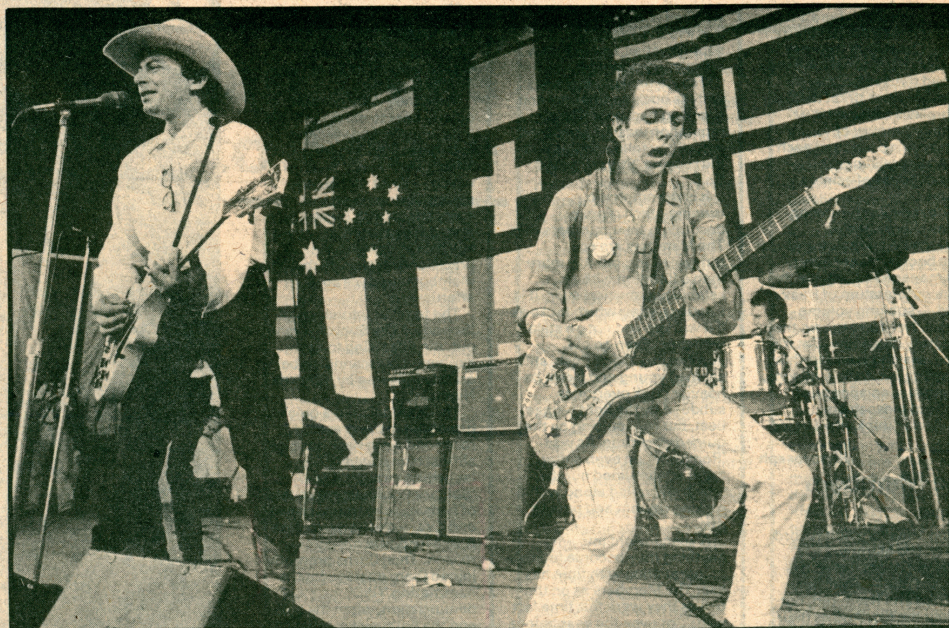
and "continuous live entertainment on the grounds" were promised.

It was a hippie's dream. But, like vacant eyed acid casualties, only the faintest glimmer of the community, hope, hippy utopia and cultural revelation that flourished briefly in the late '60s could be felt at Monterey.

Probably a combination of factors — high admission prices, a two hour-plus drive from the closest major city and no real headliners — kept the crowds away.

On Saturday, only 500 people shuffled about the fairgrounds as the Soul Syndicate (a Jamaican reggae band) settled into a slow groove inside the 12,000 capacity arena. The music was hot and sluggish, and it did little to make the sight of a scant few hundred bodies in the huge, empty and dusty arena anything but depressing.

The concert took a slightly more upbeat turn when Joe Ely hit the stage and tore into his peculiar brand of C&W/rockabilly. Wearing a big cowboy hat, white cowboy shirt with silver spangles down the front and tan pants



The cowboy and the punk: Joes Ely and Strummer. Pic: Chester Simpson.

stuffed into black cowboy boots, Ely created the feeling of a Texas state fair for the 45 minutes he was on.

How ridiculous the whole idea of a '60s festival in the

late '70s really was became abundantly clear when The Clash, arguably the greatest rock and roll band currently intact, took the stage.

As Mick Jones launched

into a blaze of raw guitar, Joe Strummer — looking truly like rock and roll incarnate with a flaming pink shirt (collar up), tight white pants and hair greased back like Gene Vincent — spat out the lyrics to "I'm So Bored With The USA". Although only about 500 fans crowded the stagefront, The Clash played as if the show would make or break them.

Strummer was so into it that he fell back into Nicky Headon's drum kit and had to be pulled up by a couple of roadies. And when a fight broke out between a cowboy hatted hippie and a short haired punk, Strummer leaped off the stage, broke up the fight to the crowd's applause, and then continued playing.

They ran non-stop through their classics: 'Complete Control', 'Clash City Rockers', 'Career Opportunities', 'Janie Jones', 'What's My Name', 'Garageland', 'Police And Thieves' and 'Safe European Home', as well as new songs like 'London Calling', 'Working For The Clampdown', 'Armageddon' ("A lot of people won't get no justice tonight/A lot of people gonna have to stand up and fight," sang Strummer, waving a drum stick threateningly) and a batch of others. The military rhythms, staggered guitar lines and guttersnipe vocals defined the wrath and frustration of the late '70s in a way that showed just how inappropriate the hippie affectations of the Tribal Stomp really were.

So why did the Clash come? Drinking a beer after their performance in the back of a

small camper, Strummer said, "We heard Peter Tosh, The Mighty Diamonds and Joe (Ely) were playing it and that sounded good to us. We really wanted to play with Joe."

In fact, the highlight of the entire two days came when, for an encore, The Clash brought Joe Ely out and they ripped into Ely's Jerry Lee Lewis inspired 'Fingernails'.

Featuring a totally gone rockabilly vocal by Ely, some classic Chuck Berry guitar riffing from Jones and a solid rhythm section courtesy of Nicky Headon, Paul Simonon and Strummer, the song seemed symbolic of the link between The Clash's modern rock vision and their acknowledged roots in the classic rock of Presley, Berry and Jerry Lee.

That night, scarcely 400 people huddled in the cold on a small platform in front of the stage while Nick Gravenites, Lee Michaels and Peter Tosh performed. Tosh was cut short after only five songs due to a local curfew.

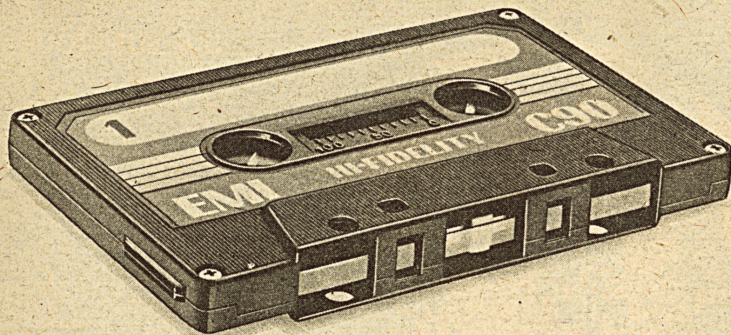
The Persuasions had cancelled out and Maria Muldaur didn't perform; no explanation was given. The Blues Project was also a no-show. On Sunday, it was left to The Mighty Diamonds and Robert Fripp to give the slim crowd some music to remember. (Canned Heat, Country Joe, and Dan Hicks limped through their sets.)

Like all the hippie pipe dreams, this one came to nothing. What if they threw a Woodstock and nobody came?

They did and they didn't and it was a drag.

Michael Goldberg

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