

Home > The Clash & Joe Ely Band: The Beginning

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Where The Austin-East London Friendship Really Began

34 years before any Digital Trade Mission - in the nascent years of anything digital, for that matter - and long before the signing of a Friendship Cities Agreement between the City of Austin and the East London Borough of Hackney... our two communities discovered each other through the most personal, the most natural, the most powerful medium of all time - the universal language of music.

The Joe Ely Band Rocks U.K. Music Charts

As this fascinating story goes, the year was 1978 and Texas roots rocker Joe Ely was riding high in the U.K. music charts with his self-titled debut album. He had a three-night run at a long gone central London club called The Venue, at 160-162 Victoria Road, across from Victoria Station. In the audience, unbeknownst to Ely & Band - in fact, as Joe admits later, he'd never even heard of them - sat the entire English punk rock band, The Clash, who knew all the words to Joe's songs.

West Texas Hellraisers Meet East London Hellraisers

After the show, the bands hung out together back stage and then Joe Strummer and mates took Ely and his band out on the town to the raucous clubs of near North and East London like Dingwall's and Hope & Anchor the rest of that night. And the next night. And the one after that. In Ely's words: "It was like the West Texas hellraisers meet the East London Hellraisers. We were from different worlds, but it was like, 'All right! Let's hang out some more!'"

The Clash Comes Burns It Up in Austin

The following year, on October 4, 1979, The Clash followed the Joe Ely Band onto the stage of Austin's famed Armadillo World Headquarters. Someone described this show as Ely and his band pouring gasoline all over the stage, and then The Clash coming out and lighting a match. "There was such an explosive feeling in the air," says Ely. "We felt it. And The Clash felt it." From Austin, they hit the dusty roads together on a string of West Texas tour dates in Lubbock, Laredo, even Juarez...and eventually ending up playing the Palladium in Hollywood and the Monterey Pop Festival together. This was all part of The Clash's Pearl Harbor Tour of the U.S.



Touring and Recording: The Two Joe's

In 1980, Ely returned to England for another tour and to record a live album there, back at The Venue, called Live Shots. This visit also included opening dates for The Clash on their London Calling Tour of the U.K.. And, very significantly, The Clash and Joe Ely even found themselves recording together - back at The Hope & Anchor Pub in Islington at 207 Upper St, N1, still there today - using the Rolling Stones mobile studio unit. Joe Ely still has these tapes and says they are "album worthy" - a project that Austin Hackney United would love to help figure out how to bring to market for us all to enjoy!

The Clash - Rock the Casbah Music Video on MTV

In 1982, The Clash were back in the USA - and in Austin where, on a few days off from touring, they ended up shooting the video footage for their big hit, Rock The Casbah, which became a top video on the young new 24-hour music television cable channel, MTV. Check out the video here:



Touring and Recording With The Two Joe's

Then Joe Ely, once again, was the opening act for The Clash's Texas tour dates. And later that year, Ely also ran into The Clash in New York City where he ended up singing backup vocals in Spanish on the song Should I Stay Or Should I Go, recorded at Jimi Hendrix's Electric Lady Studios in The Village.

The bands stayed close through the years. In fact, Ely and Strummer had planned to go to Mexico to make an album together when Strummer died suddenly in 2002 from an undiagnosed heart defect.

Good Things Come in Two's: More Stories About Joe Ely and Joe Strummer

Here are several great articles that provide more background on this most interesting and unusual "twinning" of The Two Joe's, Ely and Strummer. Fun reading for fans of both artists and both cities. And special thanks to Austin Hackney United colleague, Troy Campbell of Austin's House Of Songs, for bringing this massively important connection to everyone's attention.

A Tribute to Joe Strummer in Joe Ely's Own Words



Farther Along • Joe Strummer 1952 – 2002

Exerpt: Obituary from Issue #44 March-April 2003

By Joe Ely

"And we thought West Texas was wild.

The year was 1978 and our band had just landed in London. We were fresh out of the honky-tonks of West Texas, with the wind in our hair and cowshit still on our boots. We wondered where in the hell we were and how we had come to this strange little country. Everything we expected was there; mysterious black cabs driving on the wrong side of the road, pallid people in muted colors carrying umbrellas and queuing up in long lines for some obscure reason. Little did we know something else was happening, beneath the surface, that we never expected to find." Read more...



Lubbock Calling: Joe Ely Remembers The Clash

By Margaret Moser, The Austin Chronicle, May 19, 2000



The Regret of Joe Ely

By The Ottawa Citizen, February 11, 2006



The 25 Most Significant and/Or Notorious Nights in Austin Music History:

#12 - The with Joe Ely Band at The Armadillo

By Michael Corcoran, Arts Labor Austin, September 19, 2014

Album of Collaboration Photos: The Joe Ely Band and The Clash



The Hope & Anchor Pub in Hackney



Joe Ely Band and The Clash



The Venue in Victoria Station-London



The Clash and Joe Ely Band



Armadillo World Headquarters 1979 - Austin,



The Two Joe's Celebrate



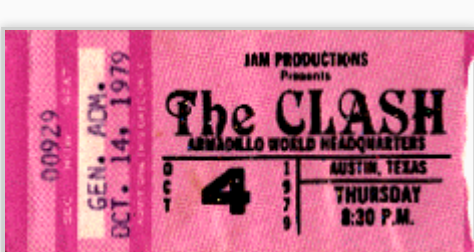
Joe Ely and Jow Strummer



Joe Ely Band and The Clash Onstage



The Clash and Joe Ely Band



October 14, 1979 Concert Ticket Stub

