

MUSIC

The Clash fires up

By PETE OPPEL

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The Clash, the world's premier punk rock band, all but set fire to the stage of the Palladium Saturday night, roaring through a 67-minute set that included 23 of the most intense rock songs to be found anywhere.

In fact, The Clash could give punk a good name, for this was some of the purest rock I've heard in years.

IF THE SHOW COULD be faulted — and it would be difficult to do so — it would be in The Clash's lack of variety. The closest these guys came to easing up on the throttle was during the first of their four encore songs, a ditty called *No Justice Tonight*, which had a typical reggae beat.

But they picked up the tempo on the next three, the second of which was a Joe Ely number featuring Ely singing lead and The Clash serving as his backup band in what was one of the concert's finest moments. The final number of the night, *White Riot*, had Ely singing harmony.

Guitarist Joe Strummer, who sang lead on most of the songs, sounded a bit hoarse at times, but that could have been the natural straining of his voice. Mick Jones, who with Strummer writes most of the band's material, was excellent on his vocals and his pulsating guitar was absolutely stunning. Paul Simonon held firm on bass and Nicky Headon was breathtaking on drums.

Although the Palladium was full for the show and those on the floor stood all the way through the set, Headon said afterwards he thought the audience was "cool."

"We had always heard Texas audiences were wild," Headon said. "But this one seemed to be just sitting around drinking their pina coladas."

ELY GOT THE SHOW off on the right foot with a short set that built as it went along. The pairing



The Clash proved Saturday that punk rock, like any music form, can't be totally shunned.

of Ely, known as a Buddy Holly devotee with country music leanings, and The Clash seemed like a strange one on paper, but it worked well.

According to Ely, country music performed as rock music is very much akin to punk — at least that's the theory he presented in his 33-minute set Saturday night.

The Clash's brilliant perform-

ance Saturday night has not made me a punk convert. But it has reinforced an opinion I've held for years — that any form of music can't be either totally embraced or completely shunned, only works by artists performing within these forms. The Clash make that oft-repeated question — "What kind of music do you like?" — totally superfluous.