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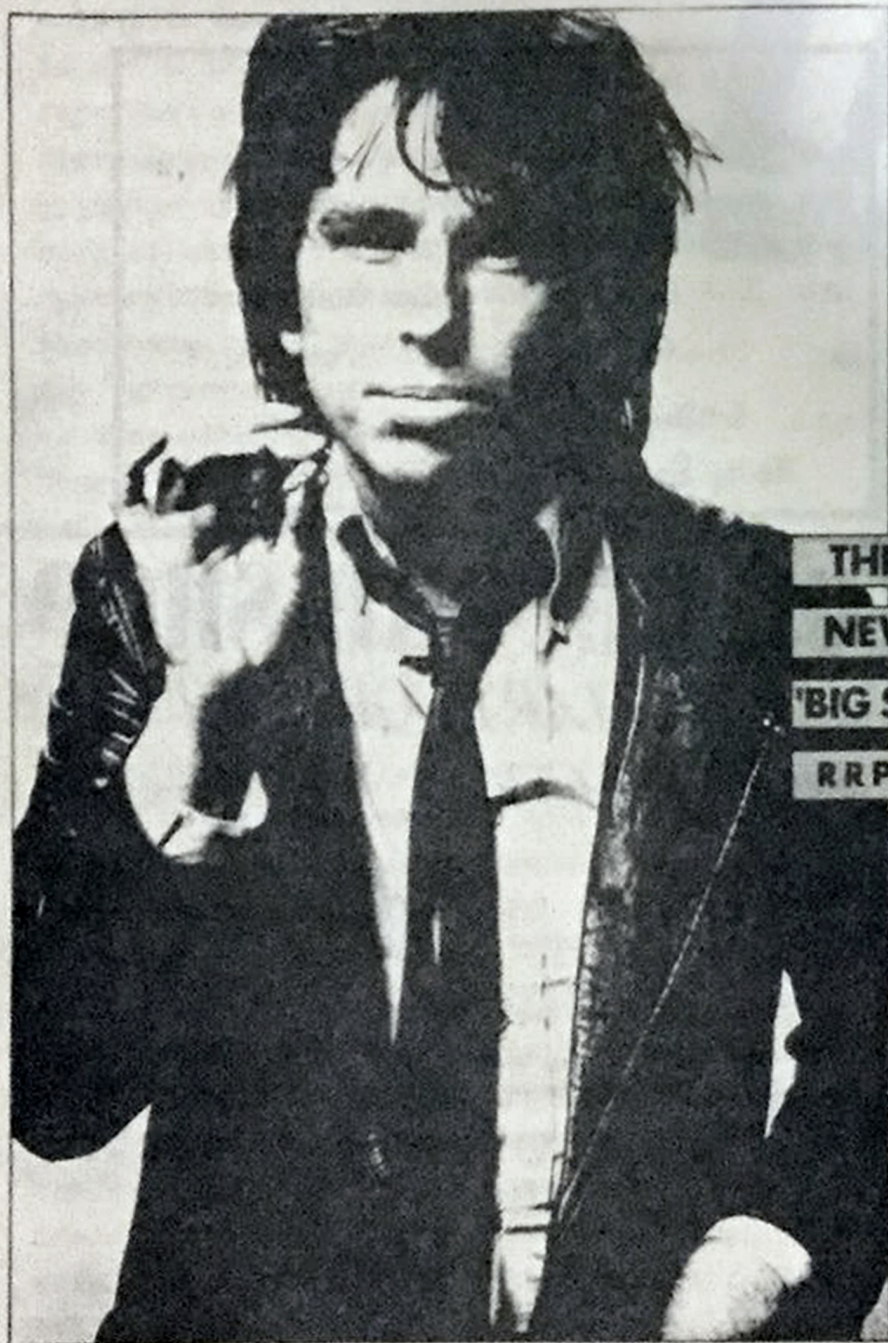
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## The "Clash" Live

A Concert Review By:

DOYLE-MARIE JOHNSON

This review may be a bit skewed, as I dislike attending large concert performances. I prefer the spontaneity and intimate atmosphere(s) of smaller clubs or Rock Discos, which allow you to dance. Even so, I had to go to the Clash concert held at the Capitol Theater in Passaic N.J., on 3.8.88 if you too are a Clash fan, you'll know what I mean.

The Capitol Theater is a large, unattractive, sleazy, rat infested building; however, it does book good bands occasionally.

When my boyfriend Chris and I arrived at the concert, we were a few minutes late, due to an incorrect turn. As we approached the entrance, numerous scalpers were peddling tickets. The security (management) was very tight this evening; one particularly impolite man demanded to search my handbag, looking for bottles, cans, cameras, cassettes, etc., I was really quite put off; I knew this place was noted for its hassling, but nonstoply while proceeding to walk through the crowd to find our seats, I couldn't help but notice how relaxed, pleasant, and diverse young, old, Punks, Neo-Nazi, black, Hispanic, Oriental, as well as white) it was. When we reached our seats at 8:20 pm., the B Girls, was almost through; what little we caught, was good. At this point, I noticed the backstage drop: an ominous representation of the Harrisburg Nuclear Plant, in black, brown, and orange Day-Glo.

Approximately 8:45pm., the second act, Lee Dorsey was announced by the English B.J.. Halfway through his set, John Scher (owner) arrives on stage to inform the audience that there has been a bomb threat! Someone had telephoned to announce that they had planted a bomb in the theater. "A bomb, my God, I don't believe it! what kind of a psychotic would do this? As the police were milling through the aisles, searching for the bomb, Chris commented, "Everyone in here is so wrecked that even if we had to, we couldn't find the exit doors! what a drag, some security, they hassle you about bottles and cans, but someone still slips past them with a bomb! They don't appear to be looking very hard for it when the Mayor was informed, he probably said: well boys, we've been trying to shut down the Capitol for quite some time now anyway! This is just what the Clash need to make them feel even more at home with America! Around 10:00pm., Lee Dorsey resumed his set, which was good and included a number "Cool Mice," that was a hit in the 60's.

Finally, about 10:45pm., the Clash are announced and hit the stage with "Clash City Rockers". Of course everyone jumped out of their seats at this point and started dancing! Next, the Clash made a statement to the effect of: "You've got to learn how to take the unexpected in your stride! They performed over two hours, were in excellent form, playing each song as if it were their last. Included were many songs from the first two albums as well as the third, they were in such a great mood, they even played "I Fought The Law."

It's difficult to describe the level of emotion, energy, intensity, and positivism generated by the Clash during a live performance. This is one group that resonates with, appreciates, and is completely in tune with its audience. I think they could sense that this audience was receptive to their influence and as such responded by giving us ONE HELL OF A GREAT SHOW. The Clash weren't lost performing in a large concert area. Their impact was as strong, if not stronger than has usually been the case at smaller establishments.

This band is as powerful and dynamic on stage as the who. They possess the ability to move their audience from the depths of depression to elation, or from anger to understanding, at the flick of a song; be it hard and biting as with "London Burning", "Career Opportunities", and "What's My Name" or intense and moody, as in "Tons Of Brixton" and "White Man In Hammer-sith Palais". They are diverse and capable of projecting a tremendous musical range, incorporating elements of reggae, blues, hard-rock, etc., as well as the uncompromising, spontaneous, aggressive, and politically infused music that was their starting point and which they've never lost sight of. The Clash, in so doing, prove that they can evolve and branch out into new directions musically; while remaining sincere to their original nature.

During a live situation, the Clash appear to be a cohesive unit, while at the same time allowing each member individual opportunity to express his own unique style. Some of the best moments came, (to me) when a spotlighted Paul Simonon (bassist) performed his song "Tons of Brixton," as I was unaware of his vocal prowess and absorbing stage presence, prior to this concert. Also, during live shows, the Clash utilize the talents of a keyboard artist, (ed). The artist you are referring to is one Micky Gallagher of the Blockheads!!!!

All in all, it was a wonderful evening (despite the threat of obliteration). The Clash were simply GREAT. Following a two hour set, they returned (along with Lee Dorsey) for two encores. Chris then turned to me and said, "well I guess this is it, they're even taking Harrisburg down! As far as I could tell, everyone left the theater feeling happy and alive.

I can only add in closing, that, if you have a chance to attend a Clash concert, by all means GO; even if you don't like the Clash, you may be surprised!!"

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