

# ALBUMS

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CLASH  
CLASH  
CLASH

## Do Nothing\* Farm

# THE SPECIALS

NEW SINGLE

2 TONE

45 RPM



### THE CLASH: 'Sandinista!' (CBS FSLN 1) By John Shearlaw

THE FACTS are simple. The Clash, who never wanted to be wanted just for their autographs, has returned from the mountain with their three albums. The Clash have delivered themselves; in time for the apocalypse, Christmas, Prince Charles' wedding, the trial of the Gang of Four, or the mid-point of the football season, depending on your point of view.

'Sandinista!' is indeed three albums, and no con. The title passably relevant window dressing "bringing Nicaraguan affairs into the world spotlight" (my quotations), the contents an initially staggering array of moods and styles the whole opus reflective of a year in London and New York. A year of reading the morning papers, a year to become crusaders. The Sandinista were the Nicaraguan freedom fighters who ousted the dictator Somoza. 'Sandinista!' is 36 new tracks: dubs and delights, a version of 'Junco Partner' and a cover of Eddie Grant's 'Police On My Back' included. A cover of 'Guns Of Brixton' by a pre-teen girl? Similar treatment of 'Career Opportunities'? 'Rebel Waltz'? A bubblegum song? ('Hillsville UK'). The calypso of 'Let's Go Crazy'? Kingston meets Notting Hill mayhem in 'Corner Soul'? And many more.

'Sandinista!' is a sound you'd recognised anywhere; a Clash amalgam, powerful, and as suited still to a sound system or a battery radio. It's loose, occasionally anarchic, sometimes fun, always different; technique and experimentation that spills out rhythm and aces when you're least expecting them. A mash up and a surprise every track.

Like a lazy, sprawling Hydra - and sometimes one with no sting - the Clash spill out over six album sides (and the same number of comic page lyric sheets) attacking everything in view.

Calypso, reggae, and other "modes of delivery" too numerous to mention - 'Sandinista' is the sound of four boys who've got a lot cleverer than they've any right to be. Hear that beat! The sound of Jamaica in Ladbrooke Grove. Hear that rumble! The tracks of the tanks in the Falkland Islands. . . or should that be Belize? Hear that groundswell! It's napalm in the New York disco, it's scandal in the Sunday papers, it's knives at the tube station, it's the Mafia at the newsagent.

If in doubt make a crisis out of mundanity. If you've got nothing better to do make a drama out of getting on the number 88. Don't take crap, take this: "Somebody got murdered / His name cannot be found / A small stain on the pavement / His name cannot be found / As the daily crowd disperses / No-one says that much / Somebody got murdered / And it's left me with a touch". ('Somebody Got Murdered').

But of course! Clash are a headline band. No name that emerged from 1977 could have ever been better engineered (and engineered it was) to drive the point home. Now, with the coming of 'Sandinista' and dread in Nicaragua (Australia, Poland, Eritrea, Chad?) we've got six sides of indulgence and there's no escape.

Each track shouts out the picture. . . Man Killed! Junkie Busted! Gang Arrested! Junta Takes Over! From the safe (indulgent?) standpoint of a New York studio and a home in London, allied with what has now become a truly awesome musical expertise, the Clash have become a messy conglomeration of present day Don Quixotes. So credible, so concerned, and so in control of their output that from behind a mixing desk they can now tilt at more non-existent windmills than even the Pentagon is aware of.

Yes, they may well hate the media and politicians. They may well believe that no-one can ever really be told what is going on. But ironically that very censorship has made the Clash its biggest victims. The rest of the world carry on with their naughty nighties, Sting's sexy secrets, and a true belief that aspirin, if taken in small doses will provide an effective protection against a heart attack.

Like a scandal sheet, the dress is all present and correct. But behind the facade - the headlines - there's the terrifying sound of nothing at all. And that's something you'd never find below the banners in the News Of The World. + if you read what you believe. +++ if you believe what you read.