

By Andrew Slater  
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IT'S 6:30 P.M. AT THE CAFE in Grand Central Station, and Mick Jones, guitarist/singer/songwriter with the Clash is one hour late for an interview. Greater injustices have marred potential encounters with the Clash, but after four days of negotiations with the group's clandestine New York office and a mild interrogation from manager Bernard Rhodes concerning my political beliefs, I was hoping things would run smoothly.

With the Clash, as one quickly learns, nothing runs smoothly. And right now, nothing runs at all. It has been two weeks since Joe Strummer, lead singer with the British rock band, went AWOL. His disappearance has caused quite a stir in both Britain and America, where the Clash are expected to tour extensively in support of a new album, "Combat Rock." Already, the London shows have been postponed, pleas for Strummer's return have been made on the BBC, and police have been notified of his disappearance. Everyone seems to be sweating. Well, almost everyone.

In combat boots, khaki Army trousers and sleeveless military vest, Mick Jones strolls into Grand Central Station with an affable, everything's-hunky-dory grin. He has been in New York for the past five days, readying a new Clash single, looking over clips for an upcoming documentary of the group's 14-night stand at Bond's Casino in New York last year, and visiting his mate, singer Ellen Foley. Clearly, he is in good spirits and exudes not the slightest concern as to the whereabouts of Joe Strummer.

"Sorry I'm late," he says, removing a felt lieutenant's cap and revealing freshly dyed orange hair. "I couldn't find you. Went into this other bar and they chucked me out. I just walked in and they said, 'We don't serve that here.' I didn't ask them anything. I looked in this other restaurant and they said, 'You can't go here.'"

Perhaps it's Jones' military attire, adorned with a pin of a bear's head clenching a knife in its jaws, which accounts for his interpersonal problems with American maitre d's. The outfit does, however, bring to mind the new album, "Combat Rock" — a tough and passionate, jangly and melodic vinyl offering that affirms the Clash as rock 'n' roll insurgents with a large-spirited global view. It surveys all the musical styles the group has previously purveyed — reggae, rock, rockabilly, improvisational jazz — without being quite as indulgent or as expansive as "Sandanista!," a sprawling three-record set that sent the band into financial disarray.

"This time, we wanted to cut it down a bit," Jones explains. "It was a conscious decision on our part. We wanted to tailor it, jlb it, make it a system as one. I think we mean to get across to a lot more people than we have in the past. We want to widen our listeners, without being too preachy or trying to convert them."

"We want to be on the charts, but not like all the other big bands which leave people in the same state as they were before. They don't give them any insight or try to communicate. They just get on with it and take a Quaalude. It's like, they leave everybody like ostriches with their bottoms up in the air so they can come along and take the money out of their pockets."

Won't it be difficult to conquer the western world, or at least the charts, without the aid of Joe Strummer, the creative genius behind the band's revolutionary rhetoric?

"First, he hasn't left the group," Jones says, his Cockney souring with each word. "He'll be back; we have faith in him."

(Apparently, Strummer walked out after manager Bernard Rhodes dispatched Glynn Johns to remix "Combat Rock" while the Clash was touring Japan. Against the singer's wishes, Rhodes booked several concerts in London immediately following the group's grueling tour of New Zealand and Japan. Strummer took an unannounced leave of absence to chew over his future with the Clash, but eventually turned up May 18 to join the group for a performance in Holland at the Lochem Festival May 20. Whatever dismay he felt over the decisions of Svengali Rhodes, it wasn't enough to break the ties that bind.)

Strummer met Jones on the dole queue and, subsequently, in the streets of London in the summer of '76. Jones had already formed the nucleus of the Clash with bassist Paul Simonon when Strummer was asked to join. A product of the British punk explosion,

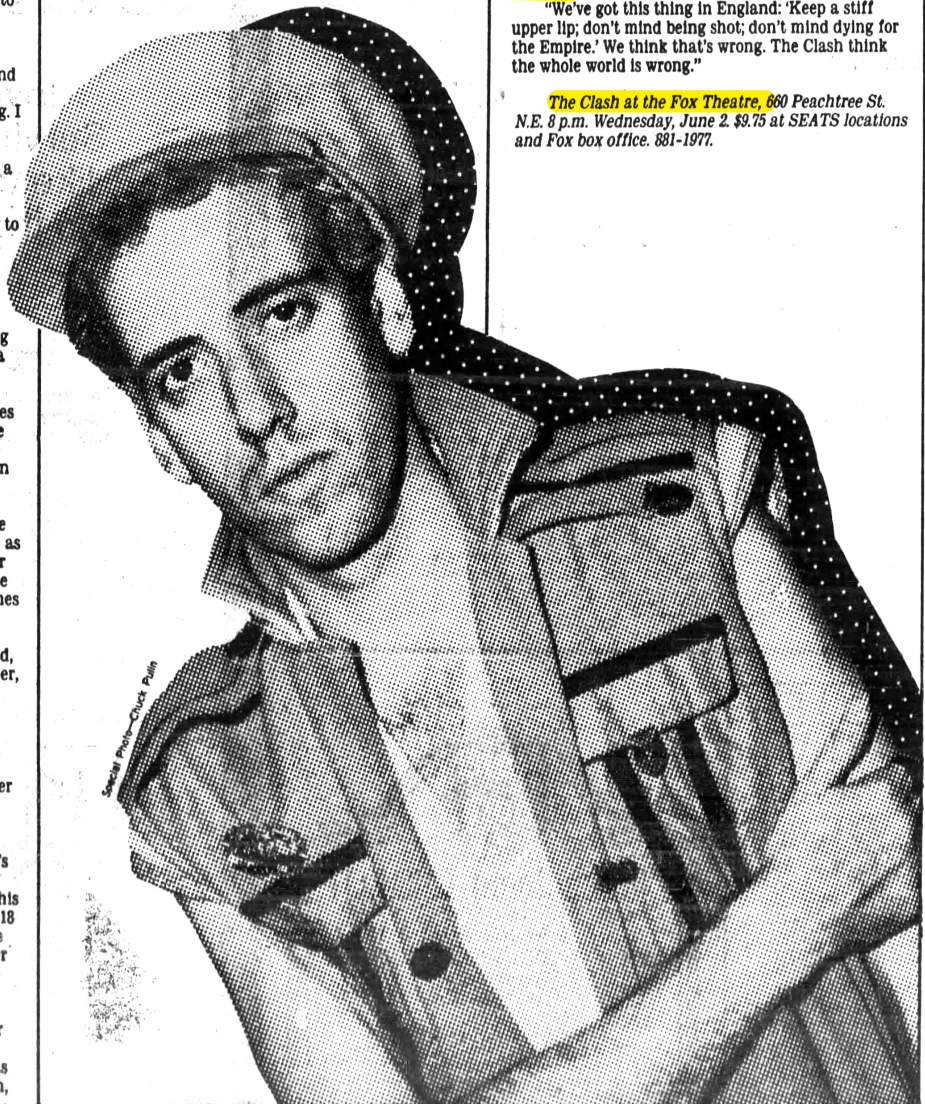
the Clash came on like a warning shot fired into the back of Anglo-American rock with a formidable, relentless debut album ("The Clash") that epitomized rock 'n' roll rebellion.

With Jones power-chording young punks' brains into Cool Whip and Strummer's snarling, proletarian visions, the Clash set out to coalesce the punk community and provide it with a spirit and a conscience. They never quite succeeded.

"I think lots of social changes have occurred because of punk," says Jones. "Now we have a good level of integration in England. Now you see rastas and punk kids walking around together and it makes me real proud to have been a part of the start of that. You might hear about race riots in England; it's poor people — blacks and whites together — all fed up with what's going on. Mick Jagger and Freddie Mercury are learning from punk; it gave 'em a good kick in the rump."

Lately, the Clash have taken a swift kick from the

## Mick's Clash with society



British press, which viewed "London Calling" and "Sandanista!" as sell-outs to American audiences.

"British audiences are much more critical than American audiences," says Strummer. "They have this thing that you don't have called the weekly music papers. If you're out of the news for a week, no one is interested in you. It's very style-oriented. It's a means of escape, really. Here, you can get on a bus or a train for very little cost and go to a different part of the country. In England, there is no way to escape, so you do it through fashion. And the latest fashion is the one they hear and read about."

While the band's music has become more melodic and complex since the punk explosion of 1977, and their vision extended beyond England's social woes to global concerns, they are still as angry as ever about the depressed conditions back home. "We're just as angry as when we started," says Jones. "Things are worse now. With all the nonsense that's going down now in England, it's worse than when we started."

Jones eyes a copy of The New York Times on the cafe table. A headline reads: "British Bomb Falklands." With a look of distaste, he leans back and sarcastically moans, "I think we should take Hyde Park and call it the Falkland Islands. Then move those 1,800 people back home, give them a block of flats and say, 'OK, here's the Falkland Islands, settle here. OK?' Argentina has that bit of land, everybody comes home, nobody gets killed. The whole war is just a thing the bloody government has cooked up to take peoples' minds off the terrible social and economic conditions of the country."

"We've got this thing in England: 'Keep a stiff upper lip; don't mind being shot; don't mind dying for the Empire.' We think that's wrong. The Clash think the whole world is wrong."

The Clash at the Fox Theatre, 660 Peachtree St. N.E. 8 p.m. Wednesday, June 2. \$9.75 at SEATS locations and Fox box office. 581-1977.



# best bets

By Weekend's Sam Mitchell

## Saturday

**29** For the past 11 years you've been able to experience the wonderful German food and entertainment of Helen's Oktoberfest, and this year you'll be able to enjoy them at the mountain village's first "Mayfest." Tonight, plus Friday and Saturday, June 4-5, there will be music, dancing, German food, fresh pretzels and merry Maypole antics. The old Heidelberg Band will provide accompaniment for lively folk dances and country sing-alongs in the Riverside Pavilion from 7 to 11 p.m. Tickets \$4. And if you hurry-up to Helen by 1 p.m. today and tomorrow, you can catch the foot-stompin' good times at the annual Helen Clogging Convention. Sixteen groups from all over the Southeast will be on hand treating audiences to traditional as well as innovative clogging routines. Admission \$2. 1-878-2521.

Paintsville, Ky., is known more for its coal mines than for its fine crystal — except when you're talking about Kentucky's real gem, **Crystal Gayle**. Loretta Lynn's little sister has come a long way in the country and country/pop charts. She will be bringing such hits as "Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue" and "I'll Get Over You" to Lanierland Music Park in Cumming tonight at 8 and 10. For an interview with Gayle, see the COUNTRY music column in this section. Tickets \$8-\$10. Georgia 400 at Jot'em Down Road. 1-887-7464.

Mustang owners are a proud lot, so proud in fact that a group of Atlanta Mustang drivers herded into a club six years ago. That club now numbers more than 4,000 members nationwide, and they will be holding their **5th Annual Eastern National Meet** this weekend at the Marriott on Interstate North. Starting at 8 this morning and 10 a.m. Sunday, more than 200 Mustangs will be on exhibit, many being judged in competitions. In addition, 25 to 50 Mustangs will be on sale to the public. Free. I-75 North at Windy Hill Road. 422-8950.

**Crystal Gayle performs Saturday at Lanierland**



**Detail from the restored Cyclorama, which will reopen Tuesday**

## Sunday

**30** On any pretty spring Sunday, you can hear a number of joyful noises on the Inaugural Stage in Piedmont Park. But this afternoon at 1, the joyful noises will be organized into a full-scale concert of traditional black sacred music, known as gospel to most of us. The Atlanta Department of Cultural Affairs and the Georgia Folklore Society have brought together nine groups from all over the state of Georgia, and they will be singing and shouting the Gospel for six hours today in the **Festival of Joyful Noise**. Emceeding the show will be Atlanta's own "Queen of Gospel," Sister Mozelle Patterson, who will lend her own powerful voice to the concert. If it rains, the free concert will be at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center at 503 Auburn Ave. 658-6691.

Classical and rock will meet today when the 45-member Atlanta Chamber Orchestra presents a free **Memorial Day Concert at Stone Mountain Park**. Beginning at 3 p.m. at the Memorial Plaza Stage, Bob Holzer will lead the musical ensemble in a salute to all those who

have given their lives fighting for our country. The concert will include such popular classics as Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture." Parking fee is \$3 one time, \$10 annual permit. 469-9831.

## Tuesday

**1** The smoke from the Battle of Atlanta has long since cleared, but the conflict rages on in the **Cyclorama** in Grant Park. The newly renovated Cyclorama opens today and will be open from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. thereafter. This unique combination of a giant mural, lights, narration and other special effects tells the story of one of the South's major battles in the War Between the States. The new facility and museum are adjacent to the Atlanta Zoo, 800 Cherokee Ave. Tickets \$3. Group rates available. 658-7625.

For those who love the music of the incomparable Bessie Smith, there will be a special treat when singer **Linda Hopkins** comes to the Plush Room of the Hotel York tonight through June 13. Hopkins, who starred in the Broadway hit "Me and Bessie" knows Smith well. Of course, Hopkins will be bringing a wide variety of her music, including "Deep in the Night," from her Tony award-winning performance in "Inner City." Show times are Tuesday-Thursday and Sunday at 9 and 11 p.m. and Friday-Saturday at 9:30 and 11:30 p.m. 683 Peachtree St. N.E. across from the Fox Theatre. Call 872-8999 for ticket information.

Don't worry about having to get out on Peachtree Street Wednesday night to sell your soul for a couple of tickets to the **sold-out Clash concert**. Instead, come to the **Clash Bash** at the 688 tonight and have a party, anyway. Whether you're revving up for the concert Wednesday night or enjoying the next best thing, you'll feel like you have a front-row seat when the 688 shows taped performances by the British band on wide-screen video. Patrons at the bash will have a chance to win the Clash's newly released album, "Know Your Rights." In addition to the videotapes, the recently formed Section 8 dance group will unveil a program based on "Know Your Rights." (For an interview with the Clash's Mick Jones, see the MUSIC page in this section.) 688 Spring St. N.W. Call 874-7500 for ticket information.

## Wednesday

**2** If you get depressed when a character on your favorite soap opera gets killed off the show, imagine how the actor or actress feels. In Frank Marcus' astounding British comedy, **"The Killing of Sister George,"** which will be presented at Theatrical Outfit tonight through June 26, a soap opera character is sacrificially annihilated to save the show's ratings. The psychological effects this has upon the actress and her lover make for a touching, funny and poignant play. Performances Wednesdays-Saturdays at 8 p.m. Tickets \$3.50 Wednesdays-Thursdays, \$5 Fridays-Saturdays. 872-0665.

## Thursday

**3** When nine theater groups who are normally competitors get together for a major project, it's something that Atlanta theater-goers don't want to miss. And that's just what will be happening at Nexus Theatre beginning tonight and running through June 13. Now in its fifth year, the **Atlanta New Play Project** will present nine new works-in-progress by member companies. A few of the plays you can look forward to seeing during the next two weeks include the Alliance Theatre's "Finding Donis Anne," Onstage Atlanta's "Afternoon at Waratah," and Academy Theatre's "Cuts and Kisses." All performances are \$3.50. Ralph McGill Boulevard at Glen Iris. Call 688-2500 for times.

## Friday

**4** Since it opened last month, the Dancer's Collective has already made strides toward becoming one of our city's finest showplaces for the art of dance. And stepping right in, Lee Harper and Dancers will perform the world premiere of Anthony Ferro's "Kracken" tonight at 8. See this week's story on the DANCE page.