

# Arts & Entertainment

## The Clash: Into it now for the cash

By CLINT ROSWELL

**N**O ONE familiar with The Clash is likely to believe the former punk rebels are in it solely for the cash nowadays, but success has a way of tainting their purist strivings.

Social justice has taken a back seat to music for this hard-driving English group, which concludes its American summer tour at the Dr Pepper Music Festival at Pier 84, at the foot of W. 45th St., for a three-night engagement that starts tonight.

"This is the first tour we have ever made money on and I'm glad, because it's about time we started thinking about ourselves," said the band's guitarist and leader, Mick Jones.

"There's nothing wrong with appealing to a wider audience. It was our fans, not us, who were being snobbish and wanted to call us their own. But it was a trap and we had to break out of it ourselves."

The Clash had to claw its way out of cult status with its loyal legion of fans who rallied behind the group from its punk beginnings in 1977. It wasn't until their third album, "London Calling," which received both critical and fan acclaim as the most potent album of 1980, that The Clash members realized they were being handcuffed by their own past.

More turmoil resulted after the re-



Members of The Clash: Joe Strummer, Paul Simonon and Mick Jones.

lease of "Sandinista!" a cumbersome three-record set that defiantly went against the grain of hardcore, raw-edged music while espousing equal rights using reggae, dub, rap and synthesized excursions. The so-called English fans dropped them for the fashionable Adam and the Ants as the darlings of the music generation and The Clash were left in the cold.

So The Clash looked toward America for a new home base. But things did not go smoothly. Not only did "Sandinista!" flop commercially, but last year's New York City dates at Bond's on Broadway had to be rescheduled after the city fire and building departments barred the shows due to hazardous conditions.

When the band did play, it lacked

the intensity and commitment of earlier years, but the concerts attracted a wider audience than ever before. Suddenly, The Clash, caught in the middle of the critics' claim they were the best band since the Rolling Stones and also the heroes of the underclass, found they had lost their voice.

More trouble persisted despite an intentional effort to release a general appeal album. "Combat Rock," easily the group's most successful album, captivated American mainstream audiences even if it hadn't the same impact at the clubs. But lead singer Joe Strummer mysteriously departed for two weeks before the tour and then drummer Topper Headen left the group one day before they were scheduled to

open in Asbury Park. He was replaced by the band's original drummer, Terry Climes, and the band appears to have since gotten over its internal struggles.

"I think if someone asked us the same question, there would always be different answers, that's the way we are," said Jones. "We're playing our music a little faster, a little harder, like in the old days because that's what suits us with Terry on drums, but we started as an everyman's band and anybody who thinks we sold out, that's their problem."

The Clash has no problems garnering new fans, many of whom are too young to realize the sociopolitical beginnings of the band, or with the record company, CBS, now only too happy to push the product.

### TODAY

**Mediterranean Cabaret.** Free music and dance program. Naumburg Bandshell, Central Park, 7:30

**New York Choral Society.** Summer sing, all-Mozart. CAMI, 165 W. 57th St., 7:30

**The Clash.** Rock concert. Pier 84, W. 45th St., 8