

Combat Rockers to Invade UVM



The Clash

By Jim O'Donnell

In case you haven't heard (you there in the library), the world's most furious rockers, the Clash, will invade UVM's Patrick Gym on Monday, Oct. 4.

The Clash (Joe Strummer, vocals/guitar; Mick Jones, guitar/vocals; Paul Simonon, bass; and new drummer Terry Chimes) burst on the music scene in 1977. Along with the anarchic Sex Pistols, they formed the vanguard of the punk movement. Unlike the Pistols, however, who set out to destroy rock 'n roll, the Clash set their sights on redefining it. Their goal was to bring back the power and meaning rock had lost in the seventies.

They were immediate hits in England, but were largely ignored this side of the Atlantic. In fact, their first album (1977), *The Clash*, was not even released in the U.S. until 1979. Though it was critically acclaimed and contained such classics as "I Fought the Law" and "White Riot," U.S. record companies

termed it "too rough" for American ears.

The band first broke here with the release of *London Calling* in 1980. A stunning double album, it was as powerful as their earlier efforts. It also proved that they had grown tremendously as both musicians and songwriters (with some exception, Strummer writes most of the group's lyrics while Jones contributes most of the music).

In 1981 they came out with the sprawling *Sandinista!*, a three-record set which showed the group at its best and worst. *Sandinista!* was dominated by the Clash's growing interest in reggae, but also contained nearly every musical form known to man. Although bogged down by its excesses, the album did not lose the audience captured by *London Calling*.

In the spring of 1982, the group released *Combat Rock*, which is becoming their biggest seller ever. Although the best

songs on this album, "Rock the Casbah" and "Should I Stay or

Should I Go," are not as powerful as earlier tunes like "Clampdown" or "Train in Vain," they are getting more airplay.

Earlier this year it appeared the band was on the verge of breaking up. Drummer Topper Headon was arrested for heroin possession and had to leave the band. More importantly, Joe Strummer, the guts of the Clash, unexpectedly took a vacation to Paris, forcing them to cancel an important European tour.

All turned out okay when Strummer returned rejuvenated. Skin basher Terry Chimes (a.k.a. Tory Crimes) was recruited for the group's upcoming North American tour.

On stage, if the Clash is feeling "right," their show can be incredibly powerful, transcending the run-of-the-mill rock acts. Unfortunately, one thing they will have no control over will be Patrick Gym's notoriously poor acoustics.