

Intense Clash show overwhelms audience

"Everybody hold on tight!"

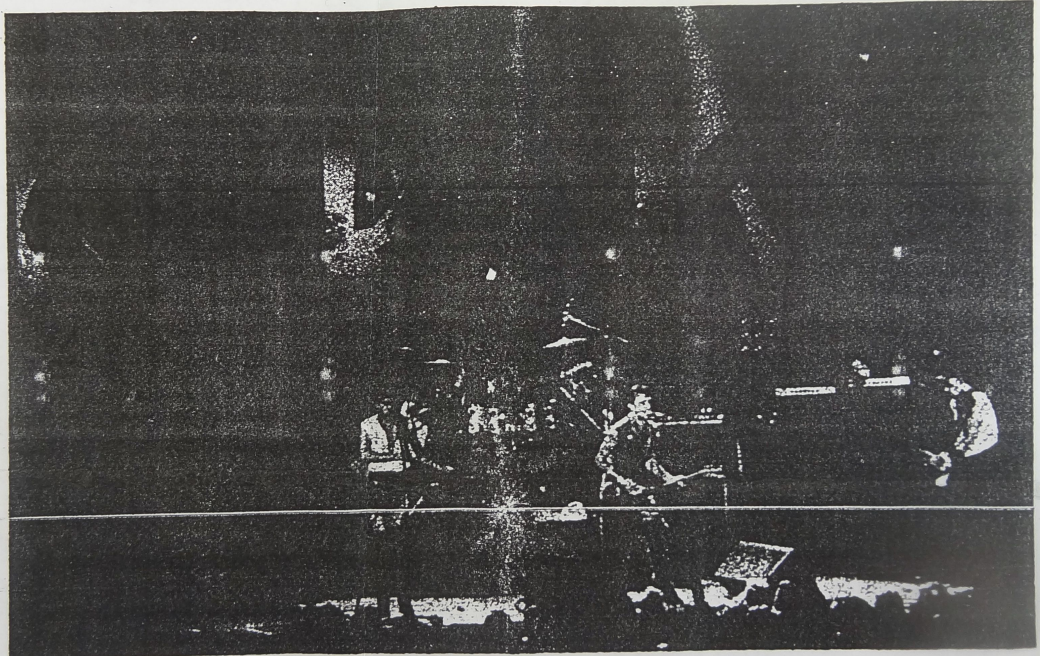
Joe Strummer's advice in The Clash's signature song "Radio Clash," was to be heeded Sunday evening when the group plunged into its intense, hour and 40 minute set.

The Cleveland reggae band, Spirit I, opened the show. The group's low-key, 45-minute set included covers of Bob Marley's classic "Jammin'" and 10cc's "Dreadlock Holiday". But it wasn't much preparation for what was to come.

When The Clash manned the "battle stations," it became clear why Combat Rock is such a fitting title for this tour. The area on the floor intended for dancing became a battle zone for those in the near-capacity audience who wished to get closer to their heroes. And what was happening onstage was as overwhelming as a blitzkrieg.

Lead singer/guitarist Strummer paused to welcome everyone to the Casbah Club, a nickname for this tour's gigs, before launching into the title cut from "London Calling". Going at a breakneck pace, the band avoided the more commercially successful songs until the middle of the set. One got the feeling the group was testing the audience to separate the longtime fans from the ones newly acquired since its music has finally been accepted by commercial and

Early in the set, The Clash gave the audience a taste of its own jazzed-up reggae, playing "One More Time", a more obscure cut from "Sandinista", the group's triple-release from last year.



The Clash Performing "Police on My Back"

Then Strummer stepped out of the limelight for a while, playing bass while Paul Simonon sang "Guns of Brixton".

Simonon, who fluidly danced non-stop during the show, thrived on the attention from fans flattened against the stage. With an occasional wink, nod or grin, he acknowledged an outstretched

hand or the call of his name. Standing right at stage's edge, he didn't flinch as those close enough reached out to touch his pantleg or boot.

Strummer propped himself in the corner of the stage during "Brixton," making faces at the audience, but remaining very low-key. Getting his guitar back and

shedding the black sunglasses he had been wearing, he livened up again for "Somebody Got Murdered," on which lead guitarist Mick Jones did vocals. Although Jones lacks the flash and aggression of many lead guitarists, his earnest expression and high spirited dancing made him even more interesting than the usual

heavy metal "blasher" style.

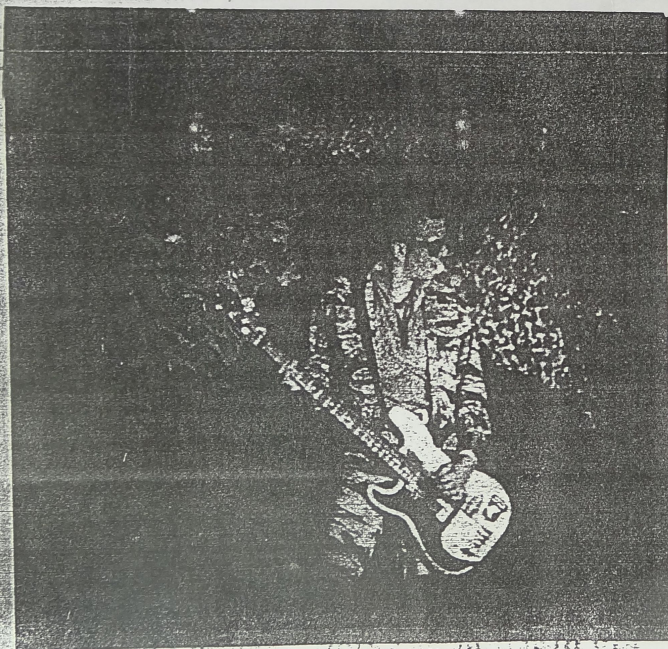
Jones was back at the microphone later in the 24-song set to sing "Train in Vain," and in the encore for "Should I Stay or Should I Go?"

Despite the two very able musician/entertainers on either side of him, Strummer still was the focal

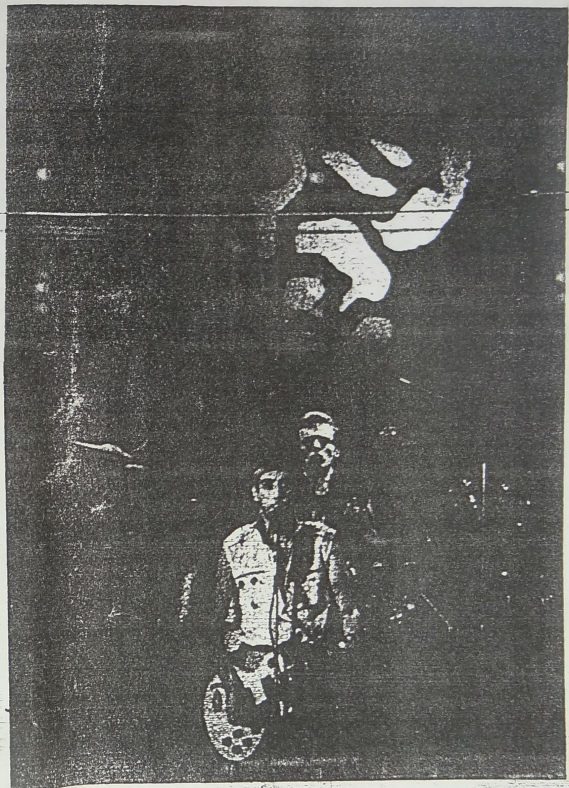
(See 'Clash,' Page 8)

Story by Cathi Ciha

Photos by Hoda Bakhshandagi



Joe Strummer Playing bass on "Guns of Brixton"



Mick Jones singing "Somebody Got Murdered"

Clash conquers Kent State

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point. Emotion enhanced his entire performance, as he worked himself into a screaming frenzy from the beginning. When not singing, he jumped on the platform with drummer Terry Chimes, or hunched over his guitar, his Mohawk shaking furiously as he played.

He was so involved in "Junco Partner", his guitar often hung idle as he gestured emphatically. And he successfully ignored the crudity of people in the audience ignorant enough to spit at the stage.

"Rock the Casbah," The Clash's latest single, still sounded fresh with Simonon's varying the original bass riff. The audience didn't need Strummer's encouragement to sing along.

The only time things slowed

down was during "Straight to Hell" the mournful Viet Nam commentary. Even the audience quieted a bit. Maybe the piercing eyes of the Amerasian child in combat clothes depicted in the slideshow backdrop touched a few people as much as Strummer's haunting vocals.

"English Civil War", an updated version of "When Johnny Comes Marching Home", from the second album, "Give 'Em Enough Rope", caught some of those less familiar with early material by surprise, but was still eagerly received. "Tommy Guns", also from the second album, ended the set, punctuated by Chimes' energetic, precise drumming which appropriately sounded like pistol-fire.

But, the audience would not let The Clash leave so easily. After a wait which wasn't nearly as long as

it felt, the stage lights came up again. The Clash came back, beginning the first encore with "Charlie Don't Surf", which is based on a scene from the movie "Apocalypse Now". The group also played "I Fought the Law", one of the rousing anthems of the early days of Punk in England.

Still unsatisfied, the audience called the four back for more, and they complied by grinding their way through the reggae cover "Police and Thieves", following it up with "London's Burning", both from the first album. Following an enthusiastic rendition of "Clampdown", the band finally delivered the song many in the audience had been clamoring for all evening — "White Riot". This time, when the Clash was through, there was no arguing.

Down-to-earth band keeps fans in touch

By CATHY CIHA

Stater Staff Writer

When a popular musical act reaches a high level of fame, the first thing it usually dispenses with is accessibility to its fans. But The Clash does its best to avoid becoming out of reach.

Following Sunday's show at Memorial Gym, about 40 people stuck around, hoping for a glimpse of the band. Those who were patient and a little stubborn eventually got to step backstage for a few minutes to say hello and get autographs.

All four musicians chatted with their fans over blaring reggae music, still munching on their after-show dinner.

Lead singer Joe Strummer, dressed in black and wearing the sunglasses he sported onstage, sat quietly in a corner, next to road manager Kosmo Vinyl. Between shaking hands and signing his name, he toyed nervously with a magic marker.

Guitarist Mick Jones sat in another corner with friends, joking and laughing energetically. He took his time with the autograph-hounds, asking their names and elaborately dating each signature.

Paul Simonon, the tall, fair-haired bassist, cut quite an impressive figure as he milled about the room. In a fawn overcoat and brown, brimmed hat that covered his closely cropped hair, he stood

out among the casual attire the rest of the group wore. He was enjoying the little "reception," and said it was something they tried to do after every show.

"It makes it more interesting, like a party," he said. "On this tour, the only time we didn't (let people backstage) was when we opened for the Who (in Detroit last week). Of course, it wasn't really our place to do it, then."

Simonon likes the party-like atmosphere to carry over to his performance as well, by constantly interacting with the audience. "It makes it more like I'm having a good time with me mates," the South London native said.

Although Strummer was



Paul Simonon...Enjoys audience contact

accommodating to the attention, his attitude about performance is different. "I don't think about the audience unless they're killing each other," he said, not mincing words. "I have my mind on too many other things."

Although drummer Terry Chimes is not officially in the band since he has been replacing Topper Headon who left The Clash last summer, the youthful-looking

redhead is still as much a part of the occasion as the other three. "They'll keep me on at least one more day," he joked about his lack of permanent status. "But, there's nothing definite."

Chimes also said that, despite rumors, so far there has been no talk of Headon rejoining the band. "We haven't heard a thing," he added.

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