

# CALENDAR

Sunday, January 29, 1984

Oakland, California



## WHITHER PUNK?

By Larry Kelp  
The Tribune

Along with 8,000 others, she came to see the Clash at the San Francisco Civic Auditorium. The back of her T-shirt read:

I'll kill myself  
I'd rather die  
If you could see the future  
You'd know why

Now there's someone who isn't worried about the day after! Hundreds with similar, home-made attire roamed the

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## 'Geisha'

In 1974, Stanford anthropology student Liza Crihfield Dalby went to Japan and became a geisha, professional entertainer and companion to men. Now she has written about this unique society of women.

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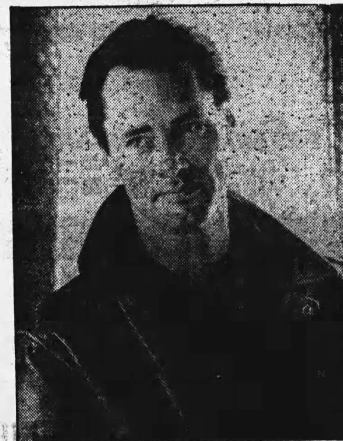
## Going Out Guide

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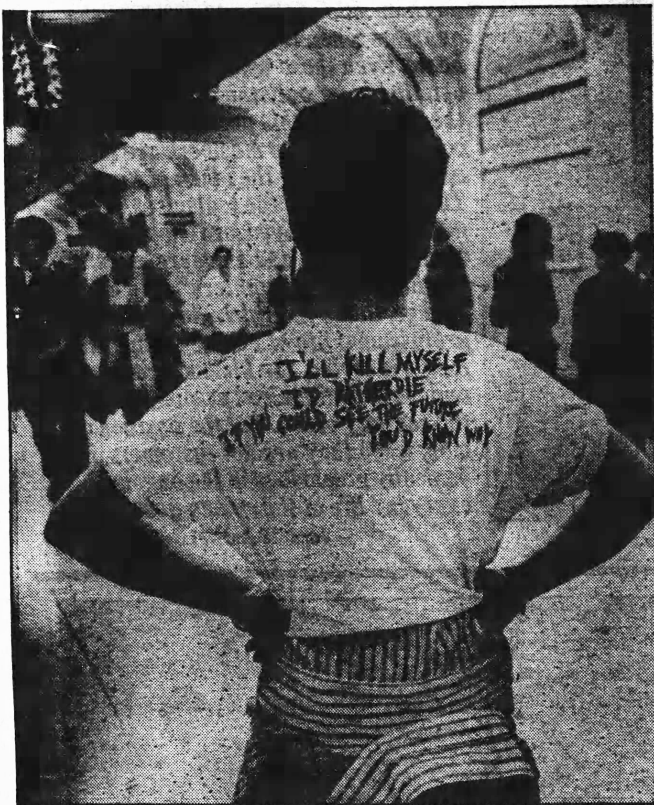
8-day pull-out listings

## 'True West' comes to TV

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Sam Shepard



By Angela Fancrazio/The Tribune

The hand-sloganed T-shirt (above) worn by a young woman to a Jan. 22 Clash concert in San Francisco bears a message of pure punk, one first carried by the Sex Pistols (right) before this 1978 Bay Area concert.



By Bob Stinnett/The Tribune

## The Clash survives with its style and code intact

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hallways with her, waiting for the Clash to provide a musical expression of their feelings.

Just when it seemed that punk rock had been permanently forgotten, England's oldest and best punk rock band — the Clash — swung back into action last Saturday and the Bay Area punks came out to celebrate.

Punk rock's supporters, as in the late '70s when punk began, believe that it is the only hope for the survival of rock music. The Clash is the only group left over from the old days that didn't either disband or sell out and go commercial.

It takes a show like this, one that appeals to the pure punks as well as a more general audience, to see the mixing of punk and mainstream rock culture. The reason is that punk rock locally is now a very isolated, insular scene. It provides meaning to its fol-

lowers who are desperate for music with more sense of purpose than that supplied by Journey and Duran Duran. But, as elsewhere, punks no longer have any effect on the rest of the world.

Mainstream pop and rock today are filled with a bunch of apolitical sissies who clog the computer-formatted radio airwaves, dazzle the eyes with meaningless videos and sell millions of records. They've stolen punk fashion, cleaned it up and made it the whole point, ignoring the reason behind its original creation.

Groups like Eurythmics and Culture Club are so fashionably outrageous that they were featured on the Jan. 25 cover of Newsweek magazine, but they had nothing to say other than to flash their fashions.

At the Civic the Clash had plenty to say. Leader Joe Strummer ranted and shouted about revolution, violence, war, imperialism, human rights

and Latin American politics.

Punk, like all important rock trends, is about teen-age rebellion. Its music and lyrics are filled with sounds and words meant to provide a complete break from what came before, and especially from parents and the establishment.

In the mid-'70s teens were faced with a world seemingly in total chaos, a disgraced president in the United States, and economic wreckage in England. Most of the English punks were teens who got out of school and couldn't find work, so expressed their outrage through music.

In the United States punk was never a working class movement. It was mainly a middle-class rebellion against the decadence rock had become mired in, with such bland stars as Peter Frampton and the Bee Gees.

The Sex Pistols were the first to wave punk's flag, but broke up after its Jan. 14, 1978, concert in San Francisco.

Then the Clash came along, musically and politically better, and filled the void. So did a large number of other groups. The difference between the Clash and every other band is that it made the leap to commercial success without losing its old following.

Its last album, "Combat Rock," went platinum, selling more than a million copies. Although it remains politically rooted in punk, the Clash can't go back to 1977. It is a mainstream rock band in the best sense of the term, playing to large audiences.

In 1977 in the Bay Area the Nuns, Dils, Avengers and dozens of other bands were formed in the English spirit, wanting to make rock music the social and political force of the youth that it had been in the late '50s and again in the late '60s.

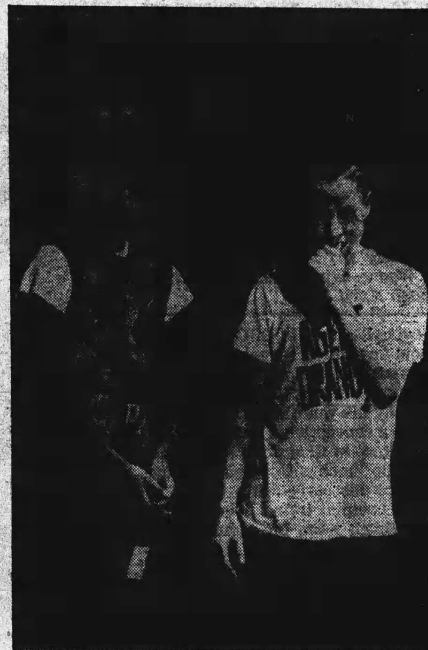
For a while it seemed that punk, which was soon renamed "new wave" in an attempt by record companies to make it respectable, was going to become the dominant rock style. Record companies signed up everything weird-looking in sight, then tried to sell them to the public. It never happened.

The streamlined approach to rock, the hairstyles and clothing were eventually absorbed into mainstream pop and fashion, but the music's energy and reason for being fizzled out except for small pockets in large cities. In the Bay Area punk fashion is popular among high school age youth, but the

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By Angelo Pancazio/The Tribune



At Jan. 22 Clash concert (left), leader Joe Strummer rants and shouts about revolution, violence, war, imperialism, human rights and Latin American politics. Two young men (above) performed break dancing before the concert.

## Punk groups fade quickly

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real punks are a small cult whose hard-core members number maybe 1,000, with similar populations to be found in the other punk centers of the country: Los Angeles, Boston, New York and Washington D.C.

Punk has its own groups and hangouts. Of the old guard, only the Dead Kennedys, with their anthem "California Uber Alles," continue to be a vital band. All the others have broken up, to be replaced by new ones who sound the same.

Two members of the Dils and one of the Nuns are now together in country rock group Rank and File, living in Texas.

Howie Klein, owner of San Fran-

cisco's rock label 415 Records, was an early promoter of the local punk scene. "Punk rock was and is the stuff of teen-age rebellion," Klein says. "The bands spurt it out, not as a business venture but as an internal expression."

"But after a while they see the MOR (middle of the road) and new wave bands getting ahead and getting record contracts by doing stuff they know they could do better. So they go for a big record company contract, lose their old following and usually don't make a successful transition to a commercial act. The Clash did it without losing their original audience. And the Red Rockers. That's all."

Although 415 was an outgrowth of the early punk scene, Klein admits that none of the bands on his label are punks. They're all going for pop success, including Translator, Romeo Void and Wire Train. Even the Red Rockers, who started out in the Clash mold on their first 415 album, have

retooled their act along more easily accessible lines.

Most punk record labels come and go as quickly as the bands. Their owners want to make records that express the punk ethic, but the audience is so small that no one ever makes enough money to live on. Locally only Subterranean Records has enjoyed some longevity.

Because the punk audience keeps growing up and moving on to less primitive musical styles (how long can you listen to someone screaming in a monotone before you need a change of pace?), the favorites go through a rapid turnover. Each new wave of punk fans needs its own heroes, not the ones the previous wave supported. The groups that were big in California a year or two ago, like DOA, Circle Jerks and Black Flag, are considered passe by 1984's punks. Current favorites include Code of Honor, Social Unrest and MDC (short for Millions of Dead Cops).

Local halls aren't the Bill Graham variety, but mostly small San Francisco spots including the original punk spa, Mabuhay Gardens, the adjacent On Broadway Theater, Sound of Music, Graffiti and Valencia Tool & Dye.

Fans can hear punk rock on the local college FM radio stations, the University of San Francisco's KUSF (90.3), the University of California at Berkeley's KALX (90.7) and Foothill College's KFJC (90.2). Listener-sponsored KPFA-FM (94.1) in Berkeley includes some punk rock in its diverse programming.

For anyone interested in a detailed look at the local punk scene, there are two profusely illustrated books that were published late last year: "Dead Kennedys, the Unauthorized Version," written by Marian Kester and edited by F-Stop Fitzgerald; and "Hardcore California, a History of Punk and New Wave," by Peter Belsito and Bob Davis. Both are published by Last Gasp.