

LONG & HOT STRUMMER

THE CLASH Manchester

JOE STRUMMER's ridiculous Mohican razor-job is the first clue. The Godfathers Of Punk are back and spitting fire, just like the old days — they're even doing 'White Riot'!

"Ow many of yah are registered to vote?" barks Joe halfway through, before kicking the chocs on a newly-penned ditty about the state of the nation. Politics? Leave it out, John!

The Clash are hard-nosed rock and roll — that flat. The truest they spoke is 'I Fought The Law', which the pogoing masses can relate to without (presumably) really understanding what it means. For the Clash, every song's an anthem, but when you've said that — "I fought the law/And the law won" — you've really summed it up. So no bother chat me politricks this time round, OK?

You all know Mick Jones was heaved-ho last year — the new boys look well chuffed to be slinging Les Pauls from the hip with punk's last remaining outlaws, and do the job with as much aplomb and gusto as you could wish for.

Vince White is the rhythm, while lead Keefchording is handled by young Nick Shepherd, a Clash contemporary from years back when he looked mean with Bristol's Cortinas (remember 'Fascist Dictator'? Let's hope not). Shortly after that, Nick grew himself a Ron Wood barnet and took up Marlboros — which

transformation is now complete as he joins the only Rolling Stones with a vacant position.

He loves it — and so do the punters; second generation punks ("Allright punk?") who heard most of the show's set from big brother's Clash collection, well-covered tonight.

As an old established band, the Clash can assemble a mother of a set, and all your faves are in there: 'London Calling', 'Bored With The USA' (Laugh? I nearly shat!), 'Guns Of Brixton', 'Clampdown', 'Hammersmith Palais', 'Complete Control', 'Police And Thieves', 'Rock The Casbah' (bit hoarse there, Joe!).

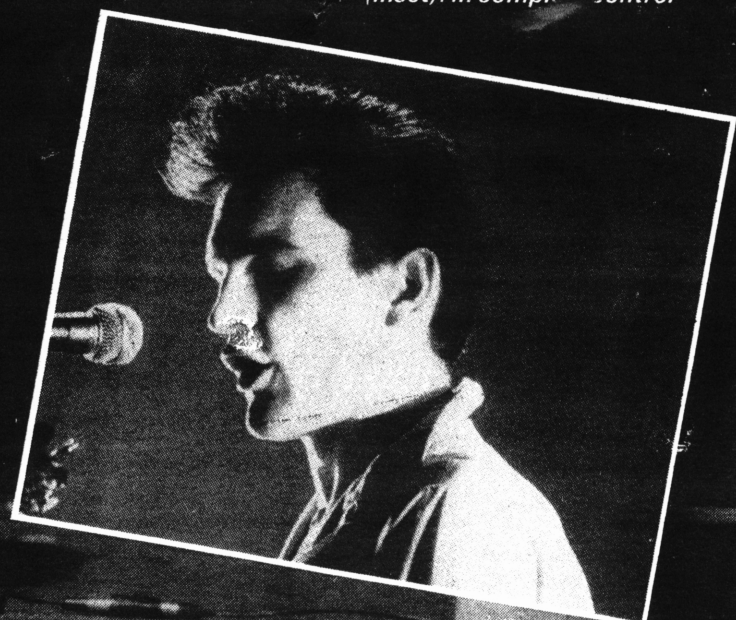
Plus a load of new ones whose titles weren't announced — although one was called 'Sex Gang War' and another 'This Is England', replete with appropriate street-riot footage on a bank of TV monitors flickering high above their heads. The lights were ace as well.

They were very loud, very tight, very enthusiastic and really, really tough. C'mon, you know the Clash already! When they hit 'Garage Band', I barfed again (which garage is that then? New York or LA?) but I'm only being snidy, not to say silly.

If you think the Clash have sold out, you don't have a clue what they were about in the first place. As Marshall Chess said to Mr Watts after the first night of the Stones' '72 tour: "Gawdammit, Charlie, rock 'n roll is on the road again!"

STEVE GAEL

JOE STRUMMER and Nick Shepherd
(inset): in complete control



Retain this portion

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