

Elaborate staging only Clash highlight

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The UT Alumni Gym hardly evoked images of the Casbah as the Clash invaded the stage Wednesday night for some hand-to-hand combat rock.

The concert promoted the band's upcoming album, "Out of Control" that is slated for an early April release by Columbia Records.

The antiquity of the old gym provided a crusty and grungy atmosphere that

added to the band's already notoriously unpolished image.

Review

Although they could be billed as the thinking man's Sex Pistols, their sociopolitical themes could not be brought to life amidst the monotonous sounds of their high energy anthems.

Through its hard-hitting lyrics, the British band derides the problems caused by the political superpower's guns before-butter mentality. Even the slogan on the souvenir T-shirts sold during the show summed up the group's anarchistic philosophy.

"Freedom is more vital than a job," the slogan read in true, belligerent Clash spirit.

Lead singer Joe Strummer belted out song after song with his amazingly powerful lungs. Strummer slammed and jumped

nonstop for an hour and a half exhibiting the stamina of an Olympic marathoner.

Occasionally, guitarists Nick Shepard and Vince White entertained the audience with elaborate fingerwork and wailing vocals.

However, the machine gun rhythm provided by the band's talented drummer, Pete Howard, could not carry the show for the rest of the group.

The incessantly heavy tribal beat eventually bogged down the audience. Enthusiasm began to wane as

the same three chords continuously blasted from the huge speaker bank at 7.1 on the Richter scale. C'mon Clash, even punk rock fanatics appreciate variety.

To make matters worse, Alumni Gym has the acoustics of a mausoleum. Of course, the building was designed for basketball, not bands.

The staging, however, was a high point of the show. Nine video screens, set on candy apple red scaffolding, flanked the stage, flashing everything

from the Marx brothers to martial arts to Mussolini.

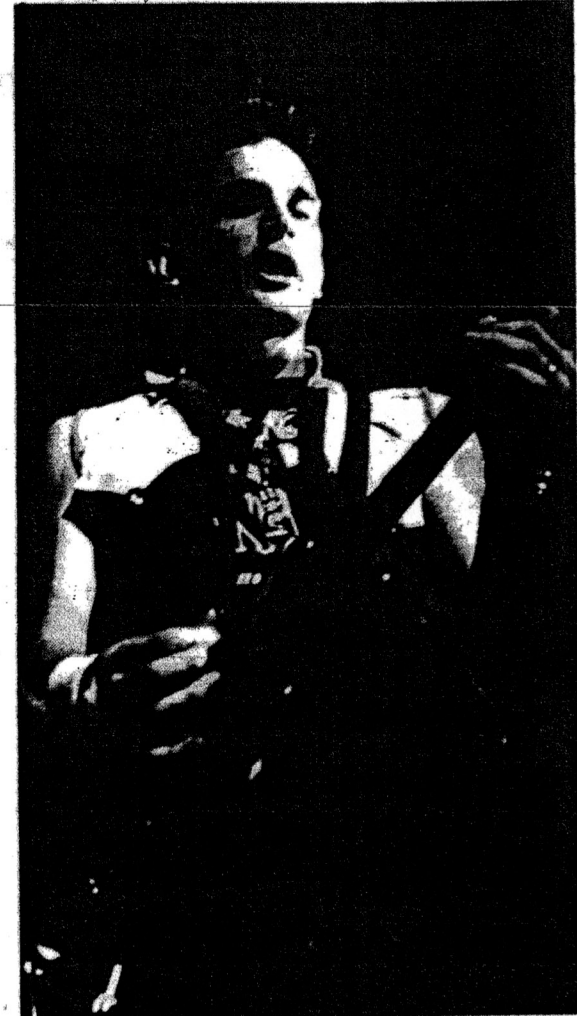
The opening band, Tav Falcon and the Panther Burns, straight from the Memphis Zoo, brought out the beasts in the relatively conservative audience.

After performing three or four rock-a-billy tunes, the band was booed and showered with bottle caps and popcorn. Following the quick exit of the Panther Burns, the audience mellowed and settled in for a quiet evening. Definitely no slam dancing in this crowd!

Although Joe and the boys played to a fairly unresponsive crowd, the audience did get fired up enough to dance to the post-concert taped music.

The crowd refused to stop dancing after the show until additional security arrived to clear the building.

Too bad the Clash was not as well-received.



Combat rock?

Nick Shepard, guitarist for the Clash, attempts to tantalize the far from sold out crowd in Alumni Gym Wednesday night.