



Geoff Payne / Special to The Courant

The Clash's Joe Strummer at Providence Civic Center concert, which showed the British group may be coming back after a personnel change.

THE BRITISH ARE COMING

U.S. Tour Tests Mettle Of a Revamped Clash

By FRANK RIZZO
Courant Rock Critic

Joe Strummer is calling it the "show-me" tour.

The lead singer and songwriter of The Clash wants to show that the British rock group is as strong as ever, despite the departure of co-writer and guitarist Mick Jones.

He wants to show that the three new band members are just as hungry as their predecessors in making The Clash's brand of intensely political music.

And he wants to show that going to a Clash concert is still an exhilarating experience.

Judging from the crowd's reaction last week at a Clash concert at the Providence Civic Center, the band is well on its way to a comeback. Two years of internal squabbles slowed the momentum gained from the band's first commercial hit album, "Combat Rock," which produced two hit singles, "Rock the Casbah" and "Should I Stay or Should I Go?" The band will perform tonight at the West Hartford Agora, where they last appeared in August 1982.

"I think kids coming into the show are experiencing straightforward fear" that the band is not as good as before, Strummer said during a 1 a.m. interview after the Providence show.

"We talk to them a lot, and they tell us they're glad we're making a new attack. . . They don't want

a show with no effort or feeling. We promised them that we would never do that."

The Clash, which was formed in 1976, has maintained its close association with a loyal following. Band members frequently talk with fans, and after the Providence show they signed autographs for more than a half hour.

In concert, The Clash is egalitarian. During the Providence show, an occasional fan slipped by security to dash on stage and place an arm around Strummer or bassist Paul Simonon before scurrying off.

During the last song, first one, then two, then a dozen, then scores of fans crowded on stage to celebrate the concert's final moments.

Over a beer in his hotel's lounge, the 30-year-old musician was eager to talk about conflicts with Jones, the band's new direction and his views on the rock industry.

During the last few years, he said, band members and Jones were constantly fighting. Jones didn't want to rehearse, tour or record, Strummer said.

"I was the diplomat in the middle for a long time," he says. "But

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A New Outlook For Pretenders' Chrissie Hynde

By ROBERT HILBURN
Los Angeles Times

NOTTINGHAM, England — It was 1 a.m. Chrissie Hynde had done the third show on her band's first tour in two years and had just finished feeding her year-old baby upstairs in the hotel. Now the most commanding woman in rock 'n' roll was sitting in the bar — relaxing. The Ohio-born Hynde, 32, feels awkward talking about herself and had put off the interview all day. But she finally relented and the conversation centered on growing up — the hard way.

"When I was 20 years old, I'd get on the back of a motorcycle with some guy who'd been up three days speeding his brains out and was drunk, and I'd be yelling, 'Faster!' Because, let's face it, it was a thrill. Right now, if I saw the same guy, I'd say, 'See ya later, pal.' These days I'm getting on the slowest Honda in town if I can't find a cab to take me home — everything, you know, that would have been totally uncool in the old days."

You assume she prefers the slow lane because she's a mother now and because two members of the Pretenders banded in separate drug-related incidents since the last tour. [The band's present tour brings them to the Bushnell auditorium in Hartford tonight, where they will play a sold-out show. The Alarm is the opening band.] Hynde was clearly shaken by the deaths of guitarist James Honeyman-Scott, 25, and bassist Pete Farndon, 30. And she's so committed to

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Steve Records

The Pretenders, with singer-guitarist Chrissie Hynde, left, will perform at the Bushnell tonight.



All Eyes on Willi Smith's Layers and Longer Skirts

This is the first of several reports from designer shows of fall and winter fashions in New York over the next two weeks.

By JEANNE MAGLATY
Courant Fashion Editor

NEW YORK — One fashion writer in New York this week for the annual shows of fall and winter fashions said she saw about 5,000 outfits during similar shows in Europe this month. Now she has started on another 5,000.

This week and next, American

design houses are introducing their fall and winter fashions in shows in and around the garment district.

What's wrong with our clothes from last year or the year before? you may ask. The old styles are still quite usable, but many people willingly pay for a new look.

When designers introduce their new styles, the old looks dowdy and ready for discard.

The new look for women this fall includes longer skirts and business-suit colors in more feminine, tailored cuts.

One designer everybody is

FALL/WINTER FASHION

The New York Shows

watching is Willi Smith, whose WilliWear show in SoHo attracted about 1,000 people on a rainy Monday. Smith won a Coty Award in 1983 for his women's wear and is considered the foremost black designer of women's clothing in the United States.

Inside a large hall equipped with runways and movie screens, Smith showed lots of layered, hooded clothing viewers must have wished they were wearing on the bone-chilling day.

Coats were long and wide with sloping shoulders and big cuffs in plaids of gray with lavender and chartreuse. Most skirts were long, too, either full circles or straight.

Advance reports from Seventh Avenue indicate that very long skirts will be popular for fall. When Smith did show short skirts, which were yoked and box-pleated, he added knit leggings or slim

trousers under them. Smith showed many split-level styles for both men and women. As is always the way at WilliWear, androgyny is "in."

Two male models — one with shoulder-length blond hair and another with Rastafarian dreadlocks — elicited a double take.

Long salt-and-pepper tweed coats looked great on both sexes.

The most spirited and fresh WilliWear looks for women were cropped pants and slim skirts with suspenders that criss-

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Overloaded Circuits of New Music

COLIN MCMENROE

Mozart had it

easy. If he wanted to write a tune, he just banged it out on a friendly old harpsichord or something.

Mozart never had to wonder, "Would this sound better if I wrote it for electronically quantized pig squeals and hammers being dropped on the floor and a marimba synthetically fused with Frederick the Great saying 'Wiener schnitzel' over and over?"

No, his choices were pretty well confined to a familiar assortment of instruments.

But I wished for a second last Friday that Mozart would appear at 19 Recording Studios in Glastonbury, just to see what he would do with the latest thing in musical instruments.

The Fairlight Computer Musical Instrument clicked cryptically and blinked up from the depths of its digital intelligence.

The rest of us (mostly music industry people, except me) just blinked back stupidly like a tribe of gorillas watching a Cuisinart demonstration.

The Fairlight C.M.I. will make you feel that way.

Even the people who use it regularly seem to spend a lot of time circling around it, speculating about what it might be doing.

"This machine knows how to do more things than people know how to make it do, doesn't it?" I asked Clive Smith, a Fairlight representative.

"Yes, I would say that's pretty accurate," said Clive, who has a slightly spiky New Wave haircut, modish glasses and the look of a mad, but agreeable, scientist. "Different people just go off into different areas. People are always finding new things. But you can never really catch up, because there's always new software being written."

The Fairlight may be the musical instrument of the future. Or it may be the musical instrument that screws up the future of music by offering composers so many options they can't think straight about music.

It's a musical instrument that can simulate other instruments, fix up music that you play sloppily, show musical sound to you as squiggly lines on a television screen so that you can alter the very nature of sound by waving a little wand at the visible wave forms. . . .

Never mind. People don't find it easy to make a definite statement about the machine.

"It's . . . well, you're just going to have to come see it, because there's no way to describe what it is," the guy from 19 Recording Studios said when he invited me to the demonstration.

Indeed, the Fairlight does not, at first, even look like a single machine so much as it looks like a word processor, an electric piano and a large dehumidifier that were left in the same room for so long that the machines began to intertwine wires.

If Mozart were around (and were so inclined), he could tap virtually any sound and feed it into the Fairlight, which would turn the sound into a musical instrument. Mozart could play selections from "Die Zauberflöte" arranged entirely from the sounds of cue balls striking eight balls.

Mozart could write a "Suite for Chicken Cluck, Ocarina, Jackhammer, Bolos-whizzing-through-the-air, Dulcimer and Lord-Laurence-Olivier-saying-peanut-butter," and the Fairlight would orchestrate those sounds as though they were violas and trumpets.

"We do have people working on things like that," Clive said. "When we let them out."

Mozart could even make Lord Laurence's voice appear on his computer screen as a wavy curve and electronically alter so that Lord Laurence sounded as though he was saying "peanut butter" with his mouth full of peanut butter in an echo chamber on Neptune.

What would Mozart have done with the Fairlight? Actually, my guess is that he would have looked at it, thought about it, asked to borrow a sledgehammer and smashed it to smithereens. "Composing is hard enough," he would have explained, "without computer anxiety. Now, where's my harpsichord?"



