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The Clash - Concert/backstage - 4/30/84 Maple Leaf Gardens, Toronto Canada

September 6, 2015

This was one of my first "legit" photo shoots, and my first at Maple Leaf Gardens. I had just landed the role of Photo Editor at my college newspaper and this earned me the right to start soliciting photo passes for just about any and every concert that rolled through Toronto. In no time I was hooked up via B.A.S.S. and the people at MLG Inc. I guess they must have been desperate for press...

So after acquainting myself with the "will call" and some protocols, here I was in the pit. I wasn't a big fan of The Clash, they didn't hold the historical significance that they do today, but I liked a few of their songs and went because my photography buddy was a huge Clash fan. He was somewhere back in the seats. What follows is half transcribed/half from memory recollections of the conversation that took place backstage with Joe Strummer and Paul Simonon after the show.

IL: Hi guys, how are you doing tonight?

JS: Yeah, fine. You?

IL: Great. Awesome show. The backstage area seems a bit sparse.

JS: Yeah, well, they expect us to act crazy and tear things up you know?

IL: Yeah, I kind of thought you would too. I guess that's just the image that punk has given itself.

JS: It's unfortunate, yes.

IL: I must say though, I think your band kind of defies the label of being punk. You actually defy description. You have a bit of everything in your music.

JS: Thanks for noticing, yes. We have many influences and it's reflected in our music.

IL: Would you care to tell me about them?

JS: Well, Paul over there might have something to tell you. I need a cuppa tea.

IL: Alright then, I'll talk to him. We're both bass players so maybe he can give me some tips.

JS: Yeah, brilliant.

IL: Hello Paul, great show tonight. I must tell you, I came to this show really to photograph it but I think I'll leave as fan.

PS: Well, we always love to hear that. I think you really have to come to the shows to appreciate the band.

IL: How so?

PS: It's just a completely different ambience, you know? We feed off the reaction we get from the audience, then we send it right back out, and the whole thing just spirals out of control in a good way.

IL: Ah, cute. The tour is called "Out Of Control".

PS: That's kind of why. It's really a bit of a wind up of the press. We're portrayed as this band that goes about smashing shit up, and for us it's just about the music. The music is the only thing that's out of control. We like it to be. What good would it be if we just stood there like dead men on stage?

IL: That's for sure. I don't think I've seen so much energy at a concert. Joe's banging on the stage with hammers, you're jumping all over...

PS: Exactly, yes.

IL: Actually, I expected this concert to be some sort of punk riot but it was nothing like that. It's almost...intellectual? The songs seem to hold a lot of meaning to your fans.

PS: We want people to think not just listen. Unfortunately, our image precedes us. I don't know if we'll ever escape that.

IL: We're both bass players, can you give me any tips?

PS: Keep playing. As much as you can (tosses me a pick).

IL: Thanks Paul. Take care.

Then Paul Simonon abruptly got up and went to play on the video game placed there. I was expecting blood-letting and punk-crazed room-destroying antics and instead Paul and Joe played video games and sipped tea. Before leaving, I asked both of them to give me an autograph, something I rarely did.



September 6, 2015



August 1, 2016



June 3, 2016



December 22, 2015



December 12, 2015



December 11, 2015



October 25, 2015



October 11, 2015



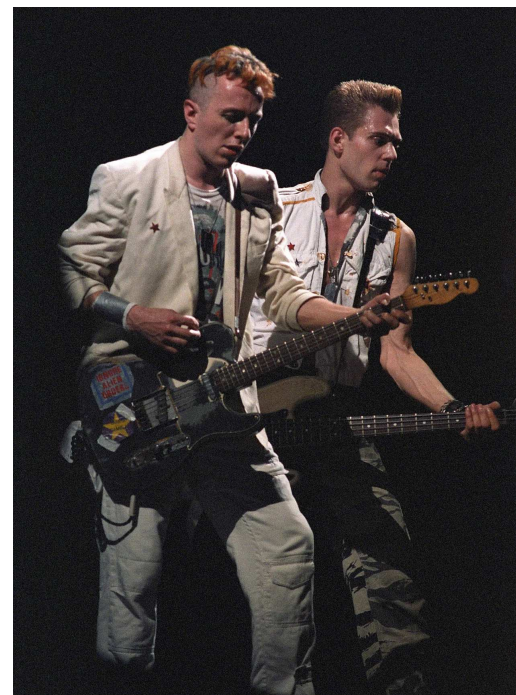
October 9, 2015



September 20, 2015



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