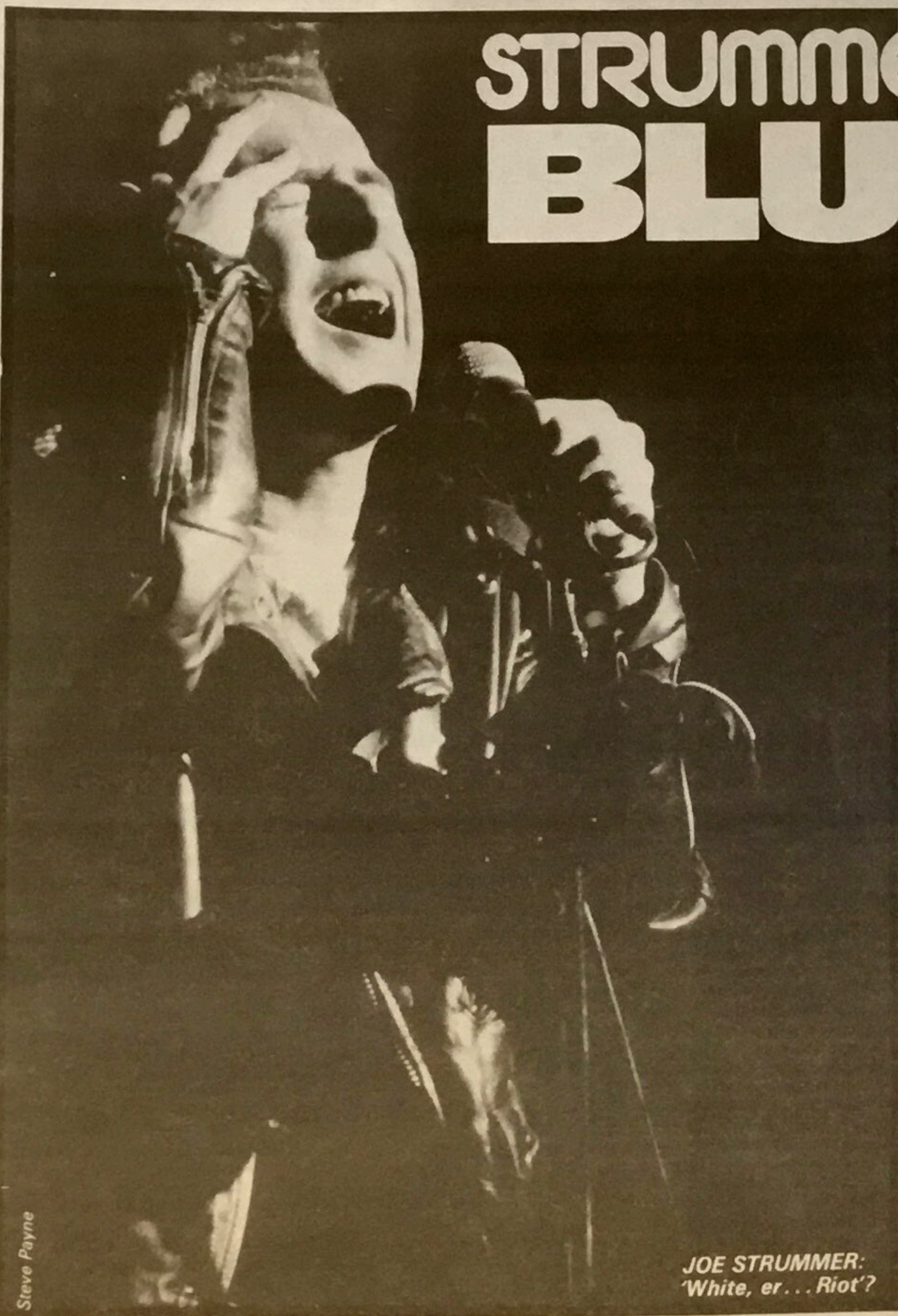


STRUMMERTIME BLUES



Steve Payne

JOE STRUMMER:
'White, er... Riot?'

THE CLASH Brixton Academy

SEX! STYLE! Subversion!
What can a poor boy do but
play homage to the best
rock'n'roll band in the world?

Music ain't ever gonna
change the status quo — but if
it could, then Thursday's
senses-pulverising
performance by the Clash at
Scargill's Xmas Party would
have won the miners' strike
there and then. They were
brilliant, unmatched. Think
of a superlative and it applied
to the Magnificent Five
tonight.

It's only when you're there
watching the Clash steam
through almost two hours of
pure rock'n'roll that you
realise how feeble the
pretenders to their politico-
pop throne really are.
Musically they make the
Redskins look like real third
division wimps, while
Strummer's sussed poetry
makes Dean's doctrinaire
slogans read like Marxist
Janet and John. This band are
the real thing, baby.

And oh how they proved it
with a sensational set that
spanned the eight years of
their career, encompassing all
those different, but equally
vital styles from 'Capital
Radio' through 'London
Calling' to 'Rock The Casbah'.

Old men with beards might
moan that the Clash didn't
make a revolution, but more
fool them for believing that
was ever on the cards.
Personally, I will settle for a
superior rock'n'roll band with
a brain, and as such, long may
the Clash reign.

Best moments from a
personal point of view — the
brooding lament of 'Bank
Robber', the steel-hard aural
stampede of 'Tommy Gun'
and a moving 'Garageland'
(thanks for the memory!).
'Radio Clash' was a station we
could all relate to, 'What's My
Name' was frustration we've
all felt, while 'White Man In
Hammersmith Palais' is as
valid today as it ever was back
in '78.

Sure, they missed a lot of
favourites, (no 'English Civil
War', no 'I Fought The Law',
no 'I'm So Bored With The
USA' — ha ha) but who cared?
What we got was a set that
meant business, packed with
energy, aggression, anger,
passion — all the qualities that
have always made them vital.
The US hasn't stripped them
of that, they've still got their
edge! And in case you missed
the point, taciturn Joe made
the odd grumbled rant
slugging off worthwhile
targets — Wham!, the *Daily
Mail*, the *Telegraph*, the real
enemy.

The audience repaid them
with applause that couldn't be
ignored, and even the
bouncers got in to the spirit of
it all. Four encores followed,
including the mighty 'Career
Opportunities' and
culminating in the way the
started in 1976 with the
ultimate anthem, 'White Riot'.
It made me remember what
seemed possible then, and
how much is still possible
now!

GARRY JOHNSON