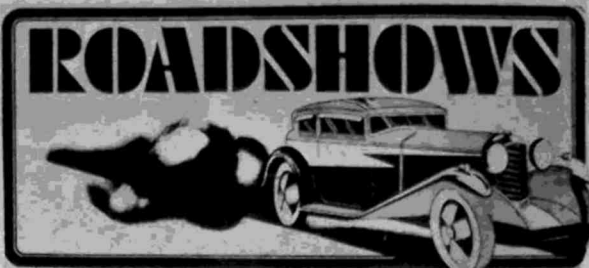


TUMBLING DICE ROADSHOWS

You win some, you lose a lot. Especially at a disastrous French punk festival.



PUNK FESTIVAL / Mont De Marsan

Innocents abroad for speed suction booze junction coach on route de Paris.

Police and Maniacs in a night grazed by a kill oh Metro knife fight

12 in a room a fresh bread tomb

and on. To Mont de Marsan boring insanity and x-rated mayor's son

Dancing driver breathless in the outskirts of the grasshopper town

A bar full of stars. Welcome

"You want to buy bed? Out zis is divine divan. Only one thousand francs

And only those with influence sleep under stiff sheets with ripe French bristols

Sore bed heads and 100 per cent confusion

So you wanna festival - you got it

But before that... J'accuse the French of making total bed chaos. The organisers failed. Result? Roadies living in backs of their vans and Fress on the streets. Powdering your nose. Dreamless

And Skydog (The Organisers) slept like Heinz food stuffed babies. Again before

Woodstock crazies had acid. They provided a backdrop for scruffy collar up fantasies. These French kids are not into fantasy

And that leads us nicely into

DAY ONE

OK. Thrown out of my room to make way for a blank faced band name of Bijou. In the process of looking for another eight by eight (failed) missed the first three hours which included Police, Maniacs and an all-girl band, The Loose

THE DAMNED

So the first turn to come under the quickly fraying edges of my critical scrutiny was The Damned, complete with Lu, their new fifth member. He's there to lift some of the guitar donkey work

from Brian James, but on this showing he didn't add anything extra

Now you can put that down to the wiped out sound system of course, which left Vanlan's mouth stranded like a goldfish

Me, I don't know yet. All I do know is that the first three quarters of their set was ruined and that meant that the new numbers that's 'Politics', 'You Take My Money', and 'Problem Child', were lost in a sea of silence

Incidentally, Brian introduced 'Politics' with 'This one's for The Clash'... don't need no politics to make me dumb

That was the first of many Damned / Clash aggro stances for the next few days the highspot of which was when Captain Sensible was carried off stage after planting stink-bombs while The Clash played

However, the last segment of The Damned's show was fine. Put it down to the fact that I've OD'd on the band. They should have released a single months ago and if they're intent on keeping Lu they ought to use that as a basis for a rethink. They're too good to lose out now

THE BOYS

Yeah - Here's the leaders of the second wave

A complete confirmation live of their soon to be released wov of an album. OK, so their set was fantastically short - but it was sure enough blissful brevity

"This one's for Mick Jagger," said Kid Reid before going into 'Rock Relic' (A Riviera soul submerged in dollar bills has gone for ever)

The Boys all meat and no decoration. Look out for a) Their new single, 'First Time', and b) Record Mirror for more of them

THE CLASH

10 seconds psyche out 6 eyes

3 sneers... LONDON'S BURNING!

The beginning of the longest Clash set in history - One and a half hours and you know something? It was a disappointment. (Look it's been three days since The Clash fractured that stage. I'm now sitting outside this St Tropez

NO SWEAT FOR NICK LOWE

EDMUNDS / LOWE / COSTELLO Liverpool

"ROLL UP, roll up for the magical misery tour"

"Er, excuse me mate, where's the coach going?"

"Shut up and keep pushing."

Down at Eric's, opposite the famed old Cavern club site, television crews are running wires all over the place and shouting things like 'Five minutes', 'check the sound levels' and other technical jargon. The gig is being filmed

First out is Elvis Costello and his band The Attractions. Probably enough has appeared in print on this gawky wonder for the time being, but the lad is great, and

so's the band. Tight set, some good new numbers like 'Chelsea' too. Eric's sweats and waits

Debut time for Nick Lowe's Ghosts, a super-group including a couple of The Rumour on bass and guitar, a former Pink Fairy on another guitar, Elvis on rhythm and his drummer, plus the fringed Lowe himself. It was a short yet enjoyable set of high standard pop rocking with 'Shake 'n' Pop' and 'Music For Money', and a down-tempo mood changer with Lowe's 'Endless Sleep'. It's good to know that people are catching up on a talent some have been raving about for years

No sweat

Rockpile next, rocking pneumonia and the boogie woogie flew around the cellar on a historical event, the last gig with

Joe Strummer failed to click

THREE

It seemed nowhere near one and a half hours

NINE

You win

Strummer said later that he failed to click with the fans and when that happens he's dead

It was just one of those nights. That's all. 'Cos even bad, The Clash are better than most. They ain't a garage band any more - They're a multi-storey car park at least

Oh well, there's always The Jam tomorrow

DAY TWO

The Jam didn't play. Bruce Foxton explains: "We were contracted to appear before The Rods and The Feelgoods but then the promoters decided to put us on after The Feelgoods which would have meant at 3 am."

Simple as that. There's no way I'm going to be a judge and jury. But there was one hell of a lot of choked people that night

A sleep overhaul prevented me from seeing Little Bob Story or The Tyla Gang. The Gang were apparently given a bottle-blazing encore demand from their cult French following and had the best reception of the weekend so it was down to the Rods and Feelgoods who flew in on a special Southend Charter

And they were both predictable. Maybe that's a little unfair. Curling guts and two ton eyelids never helped. But that didn't stop me thinking that Barrie Masters' cartwheel wasn't as spontaneous as it used to be

The Rods are backfiring into a blind alley and last years' raves are becoming this years' graves

The same with The Feelgoods. See, a music writer had the opportunity to watch a favourite band time and time again and eventually you find there's nothing more they can offer. No special tingle. No transient solution to a blue night, no good time blackout

But I guess The Feelgoods don't worry about what journalists think

Whoops, there goes the bus... VICTIOUS

And in the running sore all night bath. At six am Feelgood rubs shoulder with Damned who bitched with Clash who ignored Jam who, etc... while bottle brandishing Frenchmen were laid out by Mick, The Damned's roadie

This festival could have encapsulated everything good on the British scene over the last year. Might of... instead the only thing stabbed into submission by the two-day bullring show were three thousand noses

Quote Corner: "Either he goes or me and you can quote me on that" - Captain Sensible referring to Lu The Damned's new member

"This festival makes me sick. The people here have a go at the Woodstock attitude but this is worse" - Paul Weller referring to the use of drugs in the festival

"She may look beautiful in this cafe at five am but at nine o'clock on a Tooting Monday morning you wouldn't look twice" - Lee Brilleaux referring to a local smiling tart

"We were the best band at the festival" - Rat Scabies

"I'm a vegetarian 'cos



JOE STRUMMER failed to click

dumpo cafe with no dough wondering why they never cut it for me

Ever heard of the New York blade in the back alley dice game, craps?

Roll the dice. Here we go now

SIX

Paul Simonon had a crowbar gland needle thrown in his backside at the local hospital 'cos of a blotch disease. He was very ill

NINE

No monitors so the back-up vocals, an integral part of the band's swipe songs, were lost

FIVE

Joe Strummer losing track signals on the lines which threw the band into momentary confusion on several numbers

SEVEN

Craps. Know what I mean?

Alright another shot

NINE

Four new numbers, 'Clash City Rockers', 'White Man In Hammersmith Palms', 'The Prisoner', 'Complete Control', each sounding as good, if not better, than anything they've ever done before. Weeks of devout rehearsing had made the songs Clash sharp and that's sharp

Obviously he has added a lot to the band with some fine songs like the better of a hit 'I Knew The Bride', and that direct bass playing. It ain't gonna be the same without him, but he bowed out on a high note

Dave Edmunds swung into the action as he sped through numbers like 'Ju-Ju Man', Parker's 'Back To Schooldays', and Nick's 'Heart Of The City', that trusty Gibson spitting out hot lead

Behind him Billy Bremner, guitar pacemaker and warbling rock 'n' roll singer and Terry the drums Williams were in unbeatable form

A scorching set left blisters on Eric's walls. At least that's what I think they were

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"I'm a vegetarian 'cos

when you eat meat you eat fear - fear of that first death call" - Mick Jones while tucking into a buttered roll for lunch

BARRY CAIN

THE REZILLOS

London

SCOTLAND'S LEADING new wave band! That's how the Press hailed the recent arrival of these incredible bunch of characters who make up The Rezillos

Their latest London gig helped to clear away any confusion about this inaccurately defined tag. Sure, they appeared in the usual threatening wrap - around shades, PVC and jump suits but as John Rotten said himself: "It's not what you wear it's what you are that counts"

To prove the point, their set consisted of high energy renditions of such scorned classics as 'Johnny B Goode' and 'Come On Everybody'

The lively members of the audience even twisted rather than pogoed to the band. Their own compositions stood up well alongside these golden oldies and proved refreshingly humorous, especially the B side of the

single 'Can't Stand My Baby'

To give you some idea of their personalities they record on Sensible Records, named after the Captain. The Rezillos rely on lunatic stage movements. Miss Fay Fife shakes about like a Barbie Doll and Eugene Reynolds counters this with his Action Man stances

Even the two guitarists Luke Warm and Hi Fi Harris jump around in frenzied activity

Entertainment is what the Rezillos are all about. I envy Scottish concert goers who are likely to see far more of this band

PHILIP HALL

DARTS

London

THE DARTS concentrate entirely on reviving a 20 years of style of music - doo - wop. But boring they are not

Where they score over other bands of their type is that much of their material is original and they waste little time dredging up old faves for the millionth time

The band is an eight-piece, four vocalists, guitarist, pianist, drummer and sax player. Most of them grab the spotlight for sometime during the set - notably the boogie woogie fresh-faced piano player Hammy Howell - But the "personality" of the group is a bug-eyed deep - down - low singer called Den Hegarty

Hegarty assaulted the crowd maniacally, climbing through the first 10 rows doing unspeakable things to rather taken aback young ladies. The song, 'I'm Mad' went on for about 10 minutes and left the crowd sweating for more

The best thing about the band - apart from their obvious musical skill and affection for a nearly dead music form - was their sense of humour, highlighted by saxist Horatio Hornblower in his send up of the death-rock songs that infested the fifties and sixties

It was great music and great fun. A double top

JEFF JAMES

SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY

NY

New York

BALLOONS FILLED the sky in celebration of Southside Johnny's return to New York kicking off a full summer series of concerts in 'mug - or - be mugged' Central Park. Somehow the outdoor atmosphere on this hot sunny evening greatly added to that good time R&B essence of Johnny's music that sets it apart from the work of such comparable rockers as Springsteen and Graham Parker - both of whom feature a depth of commitment that Johnny lacks

But Johnny's band is strictly for partying, and by mid - show, when Ronnie Specter, the queen of rock 'n' roll, joined them on stage, the audience was doing just that. Stole critics and jaded publicity people alike were seen in the throes of Southside mania, especially during 'You Mean So Much To Me Baby', which featured a heated call and response vocal duel between Ronnie and Johnny

Springsteen's saxist, Clarence Clemons, came out for the final numbers, continuing on through three encores that sent everyone home high enough to overlook the scores of drunks and pushers who populate what must remain the sexiest park in the world. JIM FARRER

Slits hit the pits



SLITS' Ari - Up, abuse

THE SLITS / FURIOUS PIG, Plymouth

THE SLITS are to new wave what Raquel Welch is to the acting profession - good for the box office but bad for the art

A large crowd turned out at Woods to catch the 'first all-girl punk rock band', but most came to watch not listen

The DJ played 'Peaches' before The Slits came on which led to a torrent of abuse from singer Ari Up

She called the Strangers '----- hippies' - two of the few intelligible words to come from her lips in the gig

Drummer Palmolive assaulted her kit with more force than control, Viv strummed a few chords as fast as she could and Tessa the bass played on while Ari-Up screamed at the poor mlke

Plymouth's voyeurs were soon bored even though Ari-Up were just a dirty old Mac covering a tiny top and a strip of cloth which was almost long enough to be called a mini-skirt

The pace was as hectic as the musical ideas were slow. Within 30 minutes the set was abruptly over

I arrived at Woods in time to see the support group Furious Pig. I wish I hadn't

CHRIS RUSHTON