

CLASH — THEN

DE MONTFORT HALL - MAY 28TH 1977

The hall isn't very full but I'm not really surprised, as the potential phenomenon known as "Punk Rock" is still a minority interest. There's a hard-core of punks looking very 'individual' at the front, but the edges are occupied by students, who I guess have come down to write something for their degrees. First band on are the Slits who by all accounts are a pretty natty bunch of young ladies, and they bound on stage to give me my first taste of live punk. They sound very raw, and we can't hear the singer 'cus she's got a sore throat. For a laugh I grab her leg and she tries to kick me in the head, which makes me some kind of hero for a while. When they finish, people look at each other and wonder what we've just seen.

Next on are Subway Sect who I have heard of, but don't know much about. The singer stands at the front while the others plug in, and I notice a bandage on his finger. He tells me that his girlfriend bit it. The guitarist makes his axe hiss and whine whilst the bass pummels and the drums crash. The Clash and the Slits are in the audience shouting abuse at the singer, who jumps into the audience, and we join him shouting "Fuck!" down the mike. When he wants to get back on stage there's no problem and we all give him a hand.

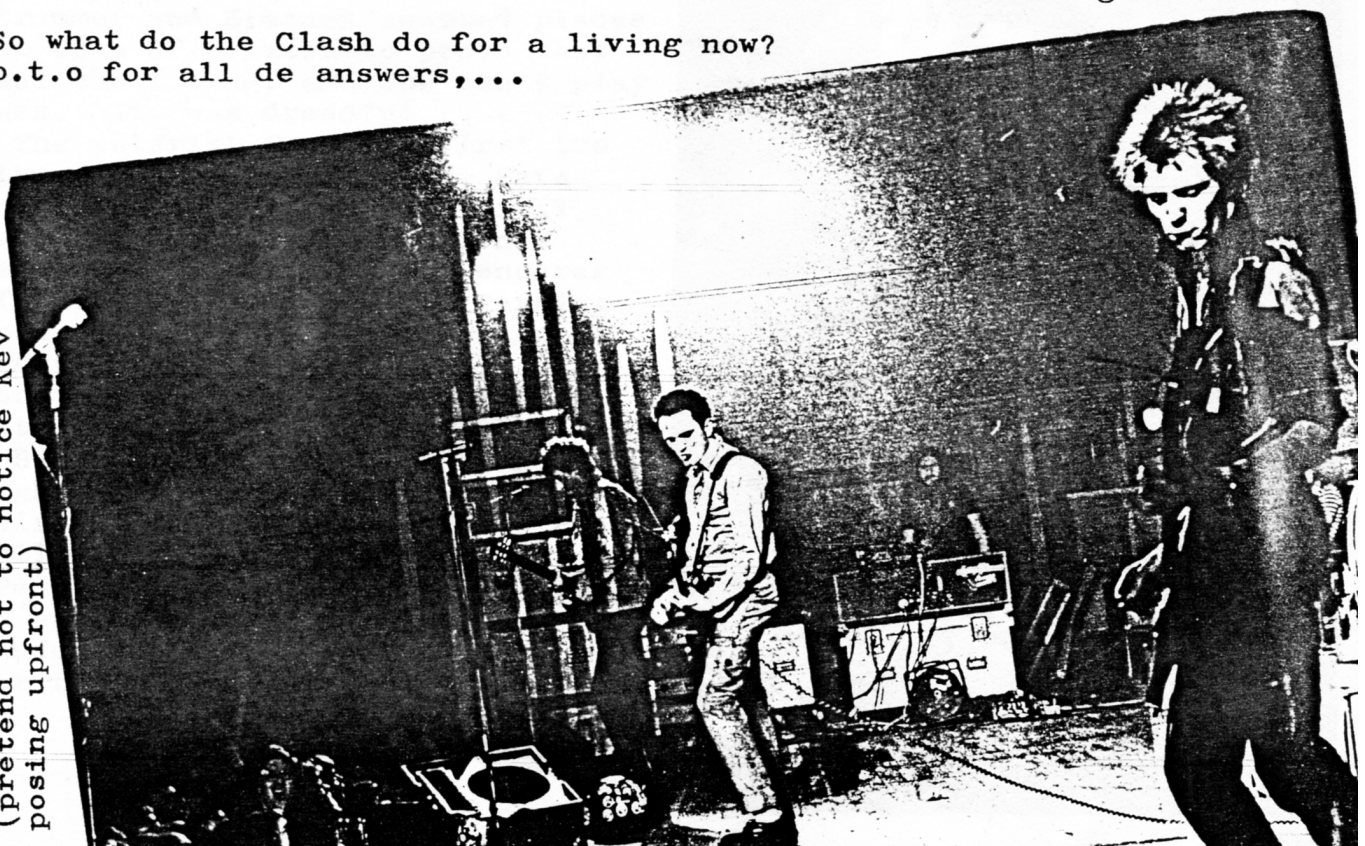
Next, the Buzzcocks; the bass-player is fat, aggressive, and an all-round cunt, but Shelley looks great standing legs apart, scratching at his broken guitar. Some idiots throw things at the stage and he says "It's not a coconut shy, y'know". The crowd pick up on the fact that each song begins with 1.2.3.4, and join Shelley in the count-ins. The bass-player gets annoyed for some reason and shouts "If you don't like it, Fuck off and see Judas Priest!", nice guy I haven't heard any Buzzcocks songs before, but pick out "Boredom" straight away, with its unbelievable two-note guitar solo.

The Clash stand with their backs to the audience, Strummer turns and shouts "London's Burning!" and the band reply majestically, they storm through the album and also include 1977 and Capitol Radio. I am introduced to the Pogo and am really knackered by the end of the set. Me and Ronnie pass a packet of 'Protex Blue' with a message on it, and "Garageland" is dedicated to us. We can't believe it, we feel so close, really in touch. Seeing this gig has been one of the highlights of my life. I go home declaring that the Clash are the greatest band in the world.

Young Reverb

So what do the Clash do for a living now?
p.t.o for all de answers,...

The Clash in '77
(pretend not to notice Kev posing up front)





CLASH - Now

Well here we are at good 'ole De Mont, the Last Gang in Town are back again, which can usually guarantee a good time for all. All the young punks were out in force, but I'll come to that later.

First on, to a half-empty house, come Lester own heroes, the New-Matics - or should I say the New-Wendy Tunes. To me, their set was dynamite; the lead singer (I'm not hip enough to know his name) getting superb little digs at the dead audience, in between playing a fistful of original, gutsy and fun songs, enjoying themselves all the way through. This is what Rock'n'Roll should be about.

Whirlwind are the sort of band who could well make the big-time, 'cus Rockabilly will always be popular in certain gutters of our society. But really, what can you expect from

a singer whose first words were "I don't want no jackin' spittin' - I don't want to have to tell you again.." treating the audience as inferiors. I'd seen enough by then, I hope he got covered in gob.

More music from the DJ, who was not bad - Booker T, B52s, Specials, Slits, Devo and many others; then on came the band of the moment - Vuh Clash!

Visually, they appear very Americanised, Micks hair got more grease than Hanger Motors, and looked better in '77. Straight into "Clash City Rockers", the classic show-opener, in the style that was to continue for the rest of the night - Strummer seeming pissed, Heaton brilliant, Jones excellent, and Somonen average. As a band, very good indeed. I'm no pro journalist, so I can't give you a chronological run-down of the songs, but I can remember the stand-outs. The material from *Londons Calling*, though, was the biggest disappointment of the night. Its a fine studio album, but live fell flat on its boat-race. The attempt on *Rudie Can't Fail* was embarrassing, bordering on pathetic, to watch, though luckily it was the worst of the bunch. Improvement with *London Calling*, *Jimmy Jazz* and *Working For The Clampdown*, but then Strummer and Simonen swapped places for *Guns Of Brixton* to prove that Paul can't sing, and Joe can't play Bass. It was dreadful.

The material from the first two albums was so much better. *Safe European Home* and *English Civil War*, *Stay Free* and *Janie Jones* were total brill, and the encores of *White Riot* and *Londons Burning* took me back to the pleasant memories of '77. All in all, a good gig, but could have been better, lads.

By the way, I saw some strange sights at De Mont. Kids with long hair, ripped T-shirts, Jeans, Baseball boots, denim jackets and "Punk Rules Ok" badges who jumped up and down to the fast songs. Wonder where they were in '77. Oh for those days...

Joe Firkin.

